Black Anarchism: A Reader

Black Rose Anarchist Federation

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INTRODUCTION

In the expansive terrain of anarchist history, few events loom as large as the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Countless books, films, songs, pamphlets, buttons, t-shirts, and more are rightfully devoted to this transformative struggle for social revolution by Spanish workers and peasants. But digging through the mountain of available material, little can be found on black militants in the Spanish revolution, like the one featured in the powerful photo on the cover of this reader -- a member of the Bakunin Barracks in Barcelona, Spain 1936, and a symbol of both the profound presence and absence of Black anarchism internationally.

For more than 150 years, black anarchists have played a critical role in shaping various struggles around the globe, including mass strikes, national liberation movements, tenant organizing, prisoner solidarity, queer liberation, the formation of autonomous black liberation organizations, and more.

Our current political moment is one characterized by a global resurgence of Black rebellion in response to racialized state violence, criminalization, and dispossession. Black and Afro-diasporic communities in places like Britain, South Africa, Brazil, Haiti, Colombia and the US have initiated popular social movements to resist conditions of social death and forge paths toward liberation on their own terms. Given the anti-authoritarian spirit of these struggles, the time is ripe to take a closer look at anarchism more broadly, and Black anarchism in particular.

The deceptive absence of Black anarchist politics in the existing literature can be attributed to an inherent contradiction found within the Eurocentric canon of classical anarchism which, in its allegiance to a Western conception of universalism, overlooks and actively mutes the contributions by colonized peoples. In recent years, Black militants, and others dedicated to Black anarchist politics, have gone a long way toward bringing Black anarchism into focus through numerous essays, books, interviews, and public talks, many of which are brought together for the first time in this reader.

Our hope is that this reader will serve as a fruitful contribution to ongoing dialogues, debates, and struggles occurring throughout the Black diaspora about how to move forward toward our liberation globally. “Anarchism,” noted Hannibal Abdul Shakur, “like anything else finds a radical new meaning when it meets blackness.” While this reader brings us closer to “a radical new meaning” for anarchism, there are glaring gaps that need to be filled to get a fuller picture of black anarchism, particularly the vital contributions of black women, queer militants, and more folks from the Global South.

In struggle,

Black Rose Anarchist Federation / Federación Anarquista Rosa Negra

THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM By Lucy Parsons

By Lucy Parsons

Comrades and Friends:

I think I cannot open my address more appropriately than by stating my experience in my long connection with the reform movement.

It was during the great railroad strike of 1877 that I first became interested in what is known as the "Labour Question." I then thought as many thousands of earnest, sincere people think,

that the aggregate power, operating in human society, known as government, could be made an instrument in the hands of the oppressed to alleviate their sufferings. But a closer study of the origin, history and tendency of governments, convinced me that this was a mistake; I came to understand how organised governments used their concentrated power to retard progress by their ever-ready means of silencing the voice of discontent if raised in vigorous protest against the machinations of the scheming few, who always did, always will and always must rule in the councils of nations where majority rule is recognised as the only means of adjusting the affairs of the people. I came to understand that such concentrated power can be always wielded in the interest of the few and at the expense of the many. Government in its last analysis is this power reduced to a science. Governments never lead; they follow progress. When the prison, stake or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then.

I will state this contention in another way: I learned by close study that it made no difference what fair promises a political party, out of power might make to the people in order to secure their confidence, when once securely established in control of the affairs of society that they were after all but human with all the human attributes of the politician. Among these are: First, to remain in power at all hazards; if not individually, then those holding essentially the same views as the administration must be kept in control. Second, in order to keep in power, it is necessary to build up a powerful machine; one strong enough to crush all opposition and silence all vigorous murmurs of discontent, or the party machine might be smashed and the party thereby lose control.

When I came to realise the faults, failings, shortcomings, aspirations and ambitions of fallible man, I concluded that it would not be the safest nor best policy for society, as a whole, to entrust the management of all its affairs, with all their manifold deviations and ramifications in the hands of finite man, to be managed by the party which happened to come into power, and therefore was the majority party, nor did it ten, nor does it now make one particle of difference to me what a party, out of power may promise; it does not tend to allay my fears of a party, when entrenched and securely seated in power might do to crush opposition, and silence the voice of the minority, and thus retard the onward step of progress.

My mind is appalled at the thought of a political party having control of all the details that go to make up the sum total of our lives. Think of it for an instant, that the party in power shall have all authority to dictate the kind of books that shall be used in our schools and universities, government officials editing, printing, and circulating our literature, histories, magazines and press, to say nothing of the thousand and one activities of life that a people engage in, in a civilized society.

To my mind, the struggle for liberty is too great and the few steps we have gained have been won at too great a sacrifice, for the great mass of the people of this 20th century to consent to turn over to any political party the management of our social and industrial affairs. For all who are at all familiar with history know that men will abuse power when they possess it, for these and other reasons, I, after careful study, and not through sentiment, turned from a sincere, earnest, political Socialist to the non-political phase of Socialism, Anarchism, because in its philosophy I believe I can find the proper conditions for the fullest development of the individual units in society, which can never be the case under government restrictions.

The philosophy of anarchism is included in the word "Liberty"; yet it is comprehensive enough to include all things else that are conducive to progress. No barriers whatever to human pro-

gression, to thought, or investigation are placed by anarchism; nothing is considered so true or so certain, that future discoveries may not prove it false; therefore, it has but one infallible, unchangeable motto, "Freedom." Freedom to discover any truth, freedom to develop, to live naturally and fully. Other schools of thought are composed of crystallised ideas - principles that are caught and impaled between the planks of long platforms, and considered too sacred to be disturbed by a close investigation. In all other "issues" there is always a limit; some imaginary boundary line beyond which the searching mind dare not penetrate, lest some pet idea melt into a myth. But anarchism is the usher of science-the master of ceremonies to all forms of truth. It would remove all barriers between the human being and natural development. From the natural resources of the earth, all artificial restrictions, that the body might be nurtures, and from universal truth, all bars of prejudice and superstition, that the mind may develop symmetrically.

Anarchists know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe in vote begging, nor political campaigns, but rather in the development of self-thinking individuals.

We look away from government for relief, because we know that force (legalized) invades the personal liberty of man, seizes upon the natural elements and intervenes between man and natural laws; from this exercise of force through governments flows nearly all the misery, poverty, crime and confusion existing in society.

So, we perceive, there are actual, material barriers blockading the way. These must be removed. If we could hope they would melt away, or be voted or prayed into nothingness, we would be content to wait and vote and pray. But they are like great frowning rocks towering between us and a land of freedom, while the dark chasms of a hard-fought past yawn behind us. Crumbling they may be with their own weight and the decay of time, but to quietly stand under until they fall is to be buried in the crash. There is something to be done in a case like this-the rocks must be removed. Passivity while slavery is stealing over us is a crime. For the moment we must forget that was are anarchists - when the work is accomplished we may forget that we were revolutionists - hence most anarchists believe the coming change can only come through a revolution, because the possessing class will not allow a peaceful change to take place; still we are willing to work for peace at any price, except at the price of liberty.

And what of the glowing beyond that is so bright that those who grind the faces of the poor say it is a dream? It is no dream, it is the real, stripped of brain-distortions materialised into thrones and scaffolds, mitres and guns. It is nature acting on her own interior laws as in all her other associations. It is a return to first principles; for were not the land, the water, the light, all free before governments took shape and form? In this free state we will again forget to think of these things as "property." It is real, for we, as a race, are growing up to it. The idea of less restriction and more liberty, and a confiding trust that nature is equal to her work, is permeating all modern thought. From the dark year-not so long gone by-when it was generally believed that man's soul was totally depraved and every human impulse bad; when every action, every thought and every emotion was controlled and restricted; when the human frame, diseased, was bled, dosed, suffocated and kept as far from nature's remedies as possible; when the mind was seized upon and distorted before it had time to evolve a natural thought-from those days to these years the progress of this idea has been swift and steady. It is becoming more and more apparent that in every way we are "governed best where we are governed least."

Still unsatisfied perhaps, the inquirer seeks for details, for ways and means, and whys and wherefores. How ill we go on like human beings eating and sleeping, working and loving, ex-

changing and dealing, without government? So used have we become to "organised authority" in every department of life that ordinarily we cannot conceive of the most common-place avocations being carried on without their interference and "protection." But anarchism is not compelled to outline a complete organisation of a free society. To do so with any assumption of authority would be to place another barrier in the way of coming generations. The best thought of today may become the useless vagary of tomorrow, and to crystallise it into a creed is to make it unwieldy.

We judge from experience that man is a gregarious animal, and instinctively affiliates with his kind co-operates, unites in groups, works to better advantage, combined with his fellow men than when alone. This would point to the formation of co-operative communities, of which our present trades- unions are embryonic patterns. Each branch of industry will no doubt have its own organisation, regulations, leaders, etc.; it will institute methods of direct communications with every member of that industrial branch in the world, and establish equitable relations with all other branches. There would probably be conventions of industry which delegates would attend, and where they would transact such business as was necessary, adjourn and from that moment be delegates no longer, but simply members of a group. To remain permanent members of a continuous congress would be to establish a power that is certain soon or later to be abused.

No great, central power, like a congress consisting of men who know nothing of their constituents' trades, interests, rights or duties, would be over the various organizations or groups; nor would they employ sheriffs, policemen, courts or jailers to enforce the conclusions arrived at while in session.

The members of groups might profit by the knowledge gained through mutual interchange of thought afforded by conventions if they choose, but they will not be compelled to do so by any outside force.

Vested rights, privileges, charters, title deeds, upheld by all the paraphernalia of government-the visible symbol of power-such as prison, scaffold and armies will have no existence. There can be no privileges bought or sold, and the transaction kept sacred at the point of the bayonet. Every man will stand on an equal footing with his brother in the race of life, and neither chains of economic thraldom nor metal drags of superstition shall handicap the one to the advantage of the other.

Property will lose a certain attribute which sanctifies it now. The absolute ownership of it-"the right to use or abuse"-will be abolished, and possession, use, will be the only title. It will be seen how impossible it would be for one person to "own" a million acres of land, without a title deed, backed by a government ready to protect the title at all hazards, even to the loss of thousands of lives. He could not use the million acres himself, nor could he wrest from its depths the possible resources it contains.

People have become so used to seeing the evidences of authority on every hand that most of them honestly believe that they would go utterly to the bad if it were not for the policeman's club or the soldier's bayonet. But the anarchist says, "Remove these evidence of brute force, and let man feel the revivifying influences of self responsibility and self control, and see how we will respond to these better influences."

The belief in a literal place of torment has nearly melted away; and instead of the direful results predicted, we have a higher and truer standard of manhood and womanhood. People do not care to go to the bad when they find they can as well as not. Individuals are unconscious of their own motives in doing good. While acting out their natures according to their surroundings

and conditions, they still believe they are being kept in the right path by some outside power, some restraint thrown around them by church or state. So the objector believes that with the right to rebel and secede, sacred to him, he would forever be rebelling and seceding, thereby creating constant confusion and turmoil. Is it probable that he would, merely for the reason that he could do so? Men are to a great extent creatures of habit, and grow to love associations; under reasonably good conditions, he would remain where he commences, if he wished to, and, if he did not, who has any natural right to force him into relations distasteful to him? Under the present order of affairs, persons do unite with societies and remain good, disinterested members for life, where the right to retire is always conceded.

What we anarchists contend for is a larger opportunity to develop the units in society, that mankind may possess the right as a sound being to develop that which is broadest, noblest, highest and best, unhandicapped by any centralised authority, where he shall have to wait for his permits to be signed, sealed, approved and handed down to him before he can engage in the active pursuits of life with his fellow being. We know that after all, as we grow more enlightened under this larger liberty, we will grow to care less and less for that exact distribution of material wealth, which, in our greed-nurtured senses, seems now so impossible to think upon carelessly. The man and woman of loftier intellects, in the present, think not so much of the riches to be gained by their efforts as of the good they can do for their fellow creatures. There is an innate spring of healthy action in every human being who has not been crushed and pinched by poverty and drudgery from before his birth, that impels him onward and upward. He cannot be idle, if he would; it is as natural for him to develop, expand, and use the powers within him when no repressed, as it is for the rose to bloom in the sunlight and fling its fragrance on the passing breeze.

The grandest works of the past were never performed for the sake of money. Who can measure the worth of a Shakespeare, an Angelo or Beethoven in dollars and cents? Agassiz said, "he had no time to make money," there were higher and better objects in life than that. And so will it be when humanity is once relieved from the pressing fear of starvation, want, and slavery, it will be concerned, less and less, about the ownership of vast accumulations of wealth. Such possessions would be but an annoyance and trouble. When two or three or four hours a day of easy, of healthful labour will produce all the comforts and luxuries one can use, and the opportunity to labour is never denied, people will become indifferent as to who owns the wealth they do not need. Wealth will be below par, and it will be found that men and women will not accept it for pay, or be bribed by it to do what they would not willingly and naturally do without it. Some higher incentive must, and will, supersede the greed for gold. The involuntary aspiration born in man to make the most of one's self, to be loved and appreciated by one's fellow-beings, to "make the world better for having lived in it," will urge him on the nobler deeds than ever the sordid and selfish incentive of material gain has done.

If, in the present chaotic and shameful struggle for existence, when organized society offers a premium on greed, cruelty, and deceit, men can be found who stand aloof and almost alone in their determination to work for good rather than gold, who suffer want and persecution rather than desert principle, who can bravely walk to the scaffold for the good they can do humanity, what may we expect from men when freed from the grinding necessity of selling the better part of themselves for bread? The terrible conditions under which labour is performed, the awful alternative if one does not prostitute talent and morals in the service of mammon; and the power acquired with the wealth obtained by ever so unjust means, combined to make the conception of

free and voluntary labour almost an impossible one. And yet, there are examples of this principle even now. In a well bred family each person has certain duties, which are performed cheerfully, and are not measured out and paid for according to some pre-determined standard; when the united members sit down to the well-filled table, the stronger do not scramble to get the most, while the weakest do without, or gather greedily around them more food than they can possibly consume. Each patiently and politely awaits his turn to be served, and leaves what he does not want; he is certain that when again hungry plenty of good food will be provided. This principle can be extended to include all society, when people are civilized enough to wish it.

Again, the utter impossibility of awarding to each and exact return for the amount of labour performed will render absolute communism a necessity sooner or later. The land and all it contains, without which labour cannot be exerted, belong to no one man, but to all alike. The inventions and discoveries of the past are the common inheritance of the coming generations; and when a man takes the tree that nature furnished free, and fashions it into a useful article, or a machine perfected and bequeathed to him by many past generations, who is to determine what proportion is his and his alone? Primitive man would have been a week fashioning a rude resemblance to the article with his clumsy tools, where the modern worker has occupied an hour. The finished article is of far more real value than the rude one made long ago, and yet the primitive man toiled the longest and hardest. Who can determine with exact justice what is each one's due? There must come a time when we will cease trying. The earth is so bountiful, so generous; man's brain is so active, his hands so restless, that wealth will spring like magic, ready for the use of the world's inhabitants. We will become as much ashamed to quarrel over its possession as we are now to squabble over the food spread before us on a loaded table. "But all this," the objector urges, "is very beautiful in the far off future, when we become angels. It would not do now to abolish governments and legal restraints; people are not prepared for it."

This is a question. We have seen, in reading history, that wherever an old-time restriction has been removed the people have not abused their newer liberty. Once it was considered necessary to compel men to save their souls, with the aid of governmental scaffolds, church racks and stakes. Until the foundation of the American republic it was considered absolutely essential that governments should second the efforts of the church in forcing people to attend the means of grace; and yet it is found that the standard of morals among the masses is raised since they are left free to pray as they see fit, or not at all, if they prefer it. It was believed the chattel slaves would not work if the overseer and whip were removed; they are so much more a source of profit now that ex-slave owners would not return to the old system if they could.

So many able writers have shown that the unjust institutions which work so much misery and suffering to the masses have their root in governments, and owe their whole existence to the power derived from government we cannot help but believe that were every law, every title deed, every court, and every police officer or soldier abolished tomorrow with one sweep, we would be better off than now. The actual, material things that man needs would still exist; his strength and skill would remain and his instinctive social inclinations retain their force and the resources of life made free to all the people that they would need no force but that of society and the opinion of fellow beings to keep them moral and upright.

Freed from the systems that made him wretched before, he is not likely to make himself more wretched for lack of them. Much more is contained in the thought that conditions make man what he is, and not the laws and penalties made for his guidance, than is supposed by careless observation. We have laws, jails, courts, armies, guns and armouries enough to make saints of

us all, if they were the true preventives of crime; but we know they do not prevent crime; that wickedness and depravity exist in spite of them, nay, increase as the struggle between classes grows fiercer, wealth greater and more powerful and poverty more gaunt and desperate.

To the governing class the anarchists say: "Gentlemen, we ask no privilege, we propose no restriction; nor, on the other hand, will we permit it. We have no new shackles to propose, we seek emancipation from shackles. We ask no legislative sanction, for co-operation asks only for a free field and no favours; neither will we permit their interference.("?) It asserts that in freedom of the social unit lies the freedom of the social state. It asserts that in freedom to possess and utilise soil lie social happiness and progress and the death of rent. It asserts that order can only exist where liberty prevails, and that progress leads and never follows order. It asserts, finally, that this emancipation will inaugurate liberty, equality, fraternity. That the existing industrial system has outgrown its usefulness, if it ever had any is I believe admitted by all who have given serious thought to this phase of social conditions.

The manifestations of discontent now looming upon every side show that society is conducted on wrong principles and that something has got to be done soon or the wage class will sink into a slavery worse than was the feudal serf. I say to the wage class: Think clearly and act quickly, or you are lost. Strike not for a few cents more an hour, because the price of living will be raised faster still, but strike for all you earn, be content with nothing less.

Following are definitions which will appear in all of the new standard Dictionaries:

Anarchism- The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man made law, the theory that all forms of government are based on violence-hence wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

Anarchy- Absence of government; disbelief in and disregard of invasion and authority based on coercion and force; a condition of society regulated by voluntary agreement instead of government.

Anarchist- 1. A believer in Anarchism; one opposed to all forms of coercive government and invasive authority. 2. One who advocates Anarchy, or absence of government, as the ideal of political liberty and social harmony.

Further reading:

Biography
I am an Anarchist
Speech at the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905
To the tramps, the unemployed, the disinherited, and miserable

ANARCHISM AND THE BLACK REVOLUTION By Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin

By Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

An Analysis of white supremacy

This pamphlet will briefly discuss the nature of Anarchism and its relevance to the Black Liberation movement. Because there have been so many lies and distortions of what Anarchism really

stands for, by both its left- and right-wing ideological opponents, it will be necessary to discuss the many popular myths about it.

This in itself deserves a book, but is not the intention of this pamphlet, which is merely to introduce the Black movement to revolutionary Anarchist ideals. It is up to the reader to determine whether these new ideas are valid and worthy of adoption.

How the Capitalists Use Racism

The fate of the white working class has always been bound with the condition of Black workers. Going as far back as the American colonial period when Black labour was first imported into America, Black slaves and indentured servants have been oppressed right along with whites of the lower classes. But when European indentured servants joined with Blacks to rebel against their lot in the late 1600s, the propertied class decided to "free" them by giving them a special status as "whites" and thus a stake in the system of oppression.

Material incentives, as well as the newly elevated social status were used to ensure these lower classes' allegiance. This invention of the "white race" and racial slavery of the Africans went hand-in-glove, and is how the upper classes maintained order during the period of slavery. Even poor whites had aspirations of doing better, since their social mobility was ensured by the new system. This social mobility, however, was on the backs of the African slaves, who were super-exploited.

But the die had been cast for the dual-tier form of labour, which exploited the African, but also trapped white labour. When they sought to organise unions or for higher wages in the North or South, white labourers were slapped down by the rich, who used enslaved Black labour as their primary mode of production. The so-called "free" labour of the white worker did not stand a chance.

Although the Capitalists used the system of white skin privilege to great effect to divide the working class, the truth is that the Capitalists only favoured white workers to use them against their own interests, not because there was true "white" class unity. The Capitalists didn't want white labour united with Blacks against their rule and the system of exploitation of labour. The invention of the "white race" was a scam to facilitate this exploitation. White workers were bought off to allow their own wage slavery and the African's super-exploitation; they struck a deal with the devil, which has hampered all efforts at class unity for the last four centuries.

The continual subjugation of the masses depends on competition and internal disunity. As long as discrimination exists, and racial or ethnic minorities are oppressed, the entire working class is oppressed and weakened. This is so because the Capitalist class is able to use racism to drive down the wages of individual segments of the working class by inciting racial antagonism and forcing a fight for jobs and services. This division is a development that ultimately undercuts the living standards of all workers. Moreover, by pitting whites against Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, the Capitalist class is able to prevent workers from uniting against their common class enemy. As long as workers are fighting each other, Capitalist class rule is secure.

If an effective resistance is to be mounted against the current racist offensive of the Capitalist class, the utmost solidarity between workers of all races is essential The way to defeat the Capitalist strategy is for white workers to defend the democratic rights won by Blacks and other oppressed peoples after decades of hard struggle, and to fight to dismantle the system of white skin privilege. White workers should support and adopt the concrete demands of the Black movement, and should work to abolish the white identity entirely. These white workers should strive

for multicultural unity, and should work with Black activists to build an anti-racist movement to challenge white supremacy. However, it is also very important to recognise the right of the Black movement to take an independent road in its own interests. That is what self-determination means.

Race and Class: the Combined Character of Black Oppression

Because of the way this nation has developed with the exploitation of African labour and the maintenance of an internal colony, Blacks and other non-white peoples are oppressed both as members of the working class and as a racial nationality. As Africans in America, they are a distinct people, hounded and segregated in U.S. society. By struggling for their human and civil rights they ultimately come into confrontation with the entire Capitalist system, not just individual racists or regions of the country. The truth soon becomes apparent: Blacks cannot get their freedom under this system because, based on historically uneven competition, Capitalist exploitation is inherently racist.

At this juncture the movement can go into the direction of revolutionary social change, or limit itself to winning reforms and democratic rights within the structure of Capitalism. The potential is there for either. In fact, the weakness of the 1960s Civil rights movement was that it allied itself with the liberals in the Democratic Party and settled for civil rights protective legislation, instead of pushing for social revolution. This self-policing by the leaders of the movement is an abject lesson about why the new movement has to be self-activated and not dependent on personalities and politicians.

But if such a movement does become a social revolutionary movement, it must ultimately unite its forces with similar movements like Gays, Women, radical workers and others who are in revolt against the system. For example, in the late 1960s the Black Liberation movement acted as a catalyst to spread revolutionary ideas and images, which brought forth the various opposition movements we see today. This is what we believe will happen again, although it is not enough to call for mindless "unity" as much of the white left does.

Because of the dual forms of oppression of non-white workers and the depth of social desperation it creates, Blacks workers will strike first, whether their potential allies are available to do so or not.

This is self-determination and that is why it is necessary for oppressed workers to build independent movements to unite their own peoples first. This is why it is absolutely necessary for white workers to defend the democratic rights and gains of non-white workers. This self- activity of the oppressed masses, (such as the Black Liberation movement) is inherently revolutionary, and is an essential part of the social revolutionary process of the entire working class. These are not marginal issues; it cannot be downgraded or ignored by white workers if a revolutionary victory is to be had. It has to be recognised as a cardinal principle by all, that oppressed peoples have a right to self-determination, including the right to run their own organisations and liberation struggle. The victims of racism know best how to fight back against it.

So What Type of Anti-Racist Group is Needed?

The Black movement needs allies in its battle against the racist Capitalist class - not the usual liberal or phoney "radical" support, but genuine revolutionary working class support and soli-

darity, otherwise called "mutual aid" by Anarchists. The basis of such unity however must be principled and be based on class interest, rather than liberal "guilt tripping", "do-gooding" or opportunism and manipulation by liberal or radical political parties. The needs of the oppressed people must be the most important consideration, but they want genuine support, not fakery or leftist rhetoric.

The Anarchist movement, which is overwhelmingly white, must start to understand that they need to do propaganda work among the Black and other oppressed community, and they need to make it possible for non-white Anarchists to organise in their communities by providing them with technical resources (printing of zines, video and CD production, etc.) and assisting with financial resources.

One reason there are so few Black Anarchists is because the movement provides no means to reach people of colour, win them over to Anarchism- and help them organise themselves. This must change if we want the social revolution to take place in America, and if we want North American Anarchism to be more than "white rights" movement.

The type of organisation needed must be a "mass" organisation working to unite all workers in common class struggle, but must be able to recognise the duty to support and adopt the special demands of the Black and other non-white peoples as those of the entire working class. It must challenge white supremacy on a daily basis, it must refute racist philosophy and propaganda, and must counter racist mobilisation and attacks, with armed self-defence and street fighting, when necessary. The objective of such a mass movement is to win the white working class over to an anti-white supremacy, class-conscious position; to unite the entire working class; and to directly confront and overthrow the Capitalist state and its rulers. The cooperation of and solidarity of all workers is essential for full Social revolution, not just its privileged white sector.

For instance, an existing organisation like Anti-Racist Action , if adopting such politics as an Anarchist group, should be given a higher priority by our movement. Every city and town should have ARA-type collectives, and every existing Anarchist federation should have internal working groups that do work around racism and police brutality. In fact, the type of group that I am talking about would be a federation itself to coordinate struggles on the national and maybe even international level.

This would be a revolutionary movement, not content to sit around and read books, elect a few Black politicians or "friends of Labour" to Congress or the State Legislature, write protest letters, circulate petitions, or other such tame tactics. It would take the examples of the early radical labour movements like the IWW , as well as the Civil rights movement of the 1960s, to show that only direct action tactics of confrontation and militant protest will yield any results at all. It would also have the example of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion to show that people will revolt, but there need to be powerful allies extending material aid and resistance info, and an existing mass movement to take it to the next step and spread the insurrection.

The Anarchists must recognise this and help build a militant anti-racist group, which would be both a support group for the Black revolution and a mass-organising centre to unite the class. It is very important to wrest the mass influence of the racial equality movement out of the hands of the left-liberal Democratic wing of the ruling class. The left liberals may talk a good fight, but as long as they are not for overthrowing Capitalism and smashing the state, they will betray and sabotage the entire struggle against racism. The strategy of the left-liberals is to deflect class-consciousness into strictly race consciousness. They refuse to appeal on the basis of class material interests to the U.S. working and middle classes to support Black rights, and as a result allow the

right-wing to capitalise unopposed on the latent racist feeling among whites, as well as on their economic insecurity. The kind of movement I am proposing will step in the breach and attack white supremacy, and dismantle the very threads of what holds Capitalism together. Without the mass white consensus to the rule of the American state, and the system of white skin privilege, Capitalism could not go on into the next decade!

The Myth of "Reverse Racism"

"Reverse Discrimination" has become the war cry of all those racists trying to roll back civil rights gains won by Blacks and other oppressed nationalities in housing, education, employment, and every aspect of social life. The racists feel these things should only go to white males, and that "minorities" and women are taking them away from white men. Millions of white workers day-in and day-out are bombarded by this racist propaganda, and it is having a big impact. Many whites believe this lie of reverse discrimination against white people. This belief is embraced by many duped white workers, who consider "reverse discrimination" to be at least partly responsible for the economic problems so many of them are suffering from today. Such beliefs propelled Ronald Reagan to his two terms as U.S. president. Reagan tried to use this racist propaganda line to precipitate a rollback in the civil rights gains of oppressed nationalities.

The racists claim the concept of reverse discrimination suggests the wholesale discrimination against Blacks and other racially oppressed groups is a hoax. Baldly stated, the idea is that the passage of the 1964 Civil rights Act ended discrimination against Blacks, Latinos and other nationalities, and women, and now the law is discriminating against white people. The racists say racial minorities and women are the new privileged groups in American society. They are allegedly getting the pick of jobs, preferential college placements, the best housing, government grants, and so on at the expense of white workers. The racists say programs to end discrimination are not only unnecessary, but are actually attempts by minorities to gain power at the expense of white workers. They say Blacks and women do not want equality, but rather hegemony over white workers.

An Anarchist anti-racist movement would counter such propaganda and expose it as a ruling class weapon. The Civil Rights Act did not cause inflation by "excessive" spending on welfare, housing, or other social services. Further, Blacks aren't discriminating against whites: whites are not being herded into ghetto housing; removed from or prohibited from entering professions; deprived of decent education; forced into malnutrition and early death; subjected to racial violence and police repression, forced to suffer disproportionate levels of unemployment, and other forms of racial oppression. But for Blacks the oppression starts with birth and childhood. Infant mortality rate is nearly three times that of whites, and it continues throughout their lives. The fact is "reverse discrimination" is a hoax. Anti-Black discrimination is not a thing of the past. It is the systematic, all pervasive reality today!

Malcolm X pointed out in the 1960s that no civil rights statutes will give Black people their freedom, and asked if Africans in America were really citizens why would civil rights be necessary. Malcolm X observed civil rights had been fought for at great sacrifice, and therefore should be enforced, but if the government won't enforce the laws, then the people will have to do so, and the movement will have to pressure the government authorities to protect democratic rights. To unite the masses of people behind a working class anti-racist movement, the following practical

demands, which are a combination revolutionary and radical reformism, to ensure democratic rights, are necessary:

1. Black and white workers' solidarity. Fight racism on the job and in society.
2. Full democratic and human rights for all non-white peoples. Make unions fight racism and discrimination.
3. Armed self-defence against racist attacks. Build mass movement against racism and fascism.
4. Community control of the police, replacement of cops by community self- defence force elected by residents. End police brutality. Prosecution of all killer cops.
5. Money for rebuilding the cities. Creation of public works brigades to rebuild inner city areas, made up of community residents.
6. Full socially useful employment at union wages for all workers. End racial discrimination in jobs, training and promotions. Establish affirmative: action programs to reverse past racist employment practices.
7. Ban the Ku Klux Klan, Nazis and other fascist organisations. Prosecution of all racists for attacks on people of colour.
8. Free open admissions to all institutions of learning for all those qualified to attend. No racial exclusion in higher education.
9. End taxes of workers and poor. Tax the rich and major corporations.
10. Full health and medical care for all persons and communities, regardless of race and class.
11. Free all political prisoners and innocent victims of racial injustice. Abolish prisons. Fight economic disparity.
12. Rank and file democratic control of the unions by building an Anarcho-Syndicalist labour movement. Make unions active in social issues.
13. Stop racist harassment and discrimination of undocumented workers.

Smash the right wing!

"Fascism is not to be debated. It is to be smashed... " --Buenaventura Durrutti, Spanish Anarchist revolutionary, 1936

As Capitalist society decays, people will look for radical and total solutions to the misery they face. The Nazis and the Klan are among the few right-wing political forces that offer, or appear to offer, a radical answer to the current problems of society for the white masses. That these solutions are false will matter little to confused and hysterical people searching desperately for a way out of the socio-economic crisis the Capitalist world is facing. Sections of the middle class, better-off layers of the white working class, poor and unemployed white workers, all poisoned by the racism of this society, are easy prey for Nazi and Klan demagogues.

The Nazis, skinheads and the Klan are the most extreme right-wing racist/fascist organisations in the United States. Today these groups are small, and many liberals like to downplay the threat they represent, even to argue for their legal "rights" to spread their racist venom. But these groups have a tremendous growth potential and could become a mass movement in a surprisingly short period of time, especially during an economic and political crisis like we are now in.

Basing themselves on alienated white social forces, the Nazis and Klan are trying to build a mass movement that can hire itself out to the Capitalists at the proper moment and assume state power. When the Capitalist feel that they might need an additional club to keep the workers and the oppressed in line, they will turn to the Nazis, Klan and similar right-wing organisations, with both money and support, in addition to strengthening the state police and military forces. If need be, the Capitalists will place them in power, (as they did in Spain, Germany and Italy in the 1920s and 1930s), so the fascists will smash the unions and other working class organisations; place Blacks, Latinos Gays, Asians, and Jews into concentration camps; and turn the rest of the workers into State slaves. Fascism is the ultimate authoritarian society when in power, even though it has changed its face to a mixture of crude racism and smoother racism in the modern democratic state.

So in addition to the Nazis and the Klan, there are other right-wing forces that have been on the rise in the last 15 years. They include ultra-conservative rightist politicians and Christian fundamentalist preachers, along with the extreme right section of the Capitalist ruling class itself - small business owners, talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh, along with the professors, economists, philosophers and others in academia providing the ideological weaponry for the Capitalist offensive against the workers and oppressed people. Not all the racists wear sheets. These are the "respectable" racists, the new right conservatives, who are far more dangerous than the Klan or Nazis because their politics have become acceptable to large masses of white workers, who in turn blame racial minorities for their problems.

The Capitalist class has already shown their willingness to use this conservative movement as a smoke screen for an attack on the Labour movement, Black struggle and the entire working class. Many city public workers have been fired; schools, hospitals and other social services have been curtailed; government agencies have been privatised; welfare rolls have been cut drastically; and the budgets of city and state governments slashed. Banks have even used their dictatorial powers to demand these budget cuts, and to even, make entire cities default if they did not submit. This even happened to New York City in the 1970s. So this is not just an issue of poor, dumb rednecks in hoods. This is about hoods in business suits.

A first step in organising and preparing the working class in the economic crisis we face is to directly take on the right-wing threat. Repressive economic legislation by conservative politicians to punish the poor and working class must be defeated; taxes on the rich and major corporations must be increased, while taxes on the workers and farmers must be abolished. If the politicians will not do it, we will organise a tax boycott to force them to do it. The Nazis and Klan must be confronted through direct action. Anarchists, the left and labour organisations must organise to defend workers and oppressed from physical assaults by the racists, as well as hold mass demonstrations in the streets at fascist rallies. We also must oppose scum like Operation Rescue that uses violent Fascist tactics against women's rights to abortions. It is part of the same battleground

Here is the situation: David Duke, the "ex"-Klansman is now part of the "respectable" right, which picks up support among the upper middle class. Meanwhile the Klan and Nazi skinheads are making headway among different social layers, mainly poor white workers and unemployed

white youth. Tom Metzger, the leader of white Aryan Resistance, called the Nazi skinheads his "Brown-shirts of the '90s". This is very dangerous, but we cannot leave these people to the Nazis and Klan uncontested. We should try to win them over, or at least neutralise any active opposition on their part. This is a defensive tactic at the very least, but really we have no choice, and it is part of our revolutionary duty to organise the entire working class anyway. We should direct propaganda to these workers to expose the Nazis and Klan for the scum they are, and show how the workers are being misled. We should also make it possible for them to fight this misery against the real enemy: the Capitalist class.

But in addition to defensive operations for propaganda, we must take direct offensive action to physically resist the racists when this is possible. For example, where the balance of forces allows it, we must organise to forcefully drive the Nazis and Klan off the streets. In order to smash their movements we must organise commando-type actions to attack their rallies, close their bookshops and newspapers, destroy their meeting halls, and break up their marches. Since the Nazis and Klan organise by threatening and using violence, we must be prepared to reply to them in kind, but in a better- organised and more effective way. For instance, pigs like David Duke and Tom Metzger, who have been advocating and leading the fascist movement in America, should be assassinated. We should infiltrate Klan and Nazi demonstrations in order to assault leaders and disrupt them, or hide at a distance and snipe at them with high-powered rifles. I have always felt that underground guerrilla movements like the Black Liberation Army, Weather Underground, and New World Liberation Front should have attacked fascist movements and assassinated their leaders. If we cripple the fascists in this fashion, we can smash the entire right and begin to smash the State. This is the only way to stop fascists. DEATH TO THE KLAN AND ALL FASCISTS!

None other than Adolph Hitler has been quoted as saying: "Only one thing could have stopped our movement. If our adversaries had understood its principle, and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our new movement." We should take heed.

One other thing that we must do, and is something which tactically separates us Anarchists from the Marxist-Leninists , is that we use our studies of the authoritarian personality to help us organise against fascist recruitment All the M-L's "United Fronts" care about is a strict political approach to defeat fascism and prevent them from attaining state power, while being able to usher the Communist party in instead. They organise liberals and others into mass coalitions just to seize power, and then crush all radical and liberal ideological opponents after they get done with the fascists. That is why the Stalinist "Communist" states resemble fascist police states so much in refusing to allow ideological plurality -- they are both totalitarian. For that matter, how much difference was there really between Stalin and Hitler? So, I say that merely physically beating back the fascists is not the issue. We need to study what accounts for the mass psychology of fascism and then defeat it ideologically, going to the core of the deep seated racist beliefs, emotions, and authoritarian conditioning of those workers who support fascism and all police state authority.

The third prong of our strategy is to organise among the workers and other oppressed sections of society with a program that addresses their needs. As has been said, the Klan and Nazis recruit among certain social layers - overwhelmingly white youth who are hard-pressed by the economic crisis. These people see Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Gays, women, and radical movements as a threat. They are racist, reactionary and potentially very violent. Fearful that they will lose the little they have, they buy the myth that the problems is "those people" trying to steal their jobs, homes, future, etc., rather than the decay of the Capitalist system.

As long as there appears to be no alternative to fighting over a shrinking social "pie," the fascists, with their simple minded "solutions," will get a hearing among the degenerate elements of the working class. The only way to undercut the appeal of the right is to organise a Libertarian workers' movement that can fight for and win the things that people need -- jobs, decent housing and schools, health care, etc. This can demonstrate concretely that there is an alternative to the right wing's poisonous "solutions," and it can win to the ranks of the workers' movement some of those people attracted to the fascist movement.

In all areas of our organising, we must carry out consistent revolutionary propaganda explaining Capitalism is responsible for unemployment, rising prices, rotten schools and housing and the rest of the decay we see around us. We must expose the fact that, while the Nazis, Klan and other right-wingers make Black, Gays, Latinos and other oppressed people the scapegoat for the economic crisis, their real aim is to destroy the entire workers movement, commit genocide, start an adventurist war and turn workers into outright slaves of the State. Therefore, these fascist forces are a threat to all workers of every nationality. It must be explained that they only want to use white workers as pawns in their scheme to create a fascist dictatorship, and all workers must unite and fight back and overthrow the state if they are to be free. DEATH TO THE KLAN, DEATH TO THE NAZIS!

Defeat white supremacy!

The very means of class control by the rich is the least understood. White supremacy is more than just a set of ideas or prejudices. It is national oppression. Yet to most white people, the term conjures up images of the Nazis or Ku Klux Klan rather than the system of white skin privileges that really under girds the Capitalist system in the U.S. Most white people, Anarchists included, believe in essence that Black people are "the same" as whites, and that we should just fight around "common issues" rather than deal with "racial matters," if they see any urgency in dealing with the matter at all. Some will not raise it in such a blunt fashion, they will say that "class issues should take precedence," but it means the same thing. They believe it's possible to put off the struggle against white supremacy until after the revolution, when in fact there will be no revolution if white supremacy is not attacked and defeated first.

They won't win a revolution in the U.S. until they fight to improve the lot of Blacks and oppressed people who are being deprived of their democratic rights, as well as being super-exploited as workers. Almost from the very inception of the North American socialist movement, the simple-minded economist position that all Black and white workers have to do to wage a revolution is to engage in a "common (economic) struggle" has been used to avoid struggle against white supremacy. In fact, the white left has always taken the chauvinist position that since the white working class is the revolutionary vanguard anyway, why worry about an issue that will "divide the class"? Historically Anarchists have not even brought up the matter of "race politics," as one Anarchist referred to it the first time this pamphlet was published. This is a total evasion of the issue.

Yet it is the Capitalist class that creates inequality as a way to divide and rule over the entire working class. White skin privilege is a form of domination by Capital over white labour as well as oppressed nationality labour, not just providing material incentives to "buy off" white workers and set them against Black and other oppressed workers. This explains the obedience of white labour to Capitalism and the State. The white working class does not see their better off condition

as part of the system of exploitation. After centuries of political and social indoctrination, they feel their privileged position is just and proper, and what is more has been "earned." They feel threatened by social gains of nonwhite workers, which is why they so vehemently opposed affirmative action plans to benefit minorities in jobs and hiring, and to redress years of discrimination against them. It is also why white workers have opposed most civil rights legislation.

Yet it is the day-to-day workings of white supremacy that we must fight most vigorously. We cannot remain ignorant or indifferent to the workings of race and class under this system, so that oppressed workers remain victimised. For years, Blacks have been "first hired, first fired" by Capitalist industry. Further, seniority systems have engaged in open racial discrimination, and are little more than white job trusts. Blacks have even been driven out of whole industries, such as coal mining. Yet the white labour bosses have never objected or intervened on behalf of their class brothers, nor will they if not pressed up against the wall by white workers.

As pointed out there are material incentives to this white worker opportunism: better jobs, higher pay, improved living conditions in white communities, etc., in short what has come to be known as the "white middle class lifestyle." This is what labour and the left have always fought to maintain, not class solidarity, which would necessitate a struggle against white supremacy. This lifestyle is based on the super-exploitation of the non-white sector of the domestic working class as well as countries exploited by imperialism around the world.

In America, class antagonism has always included racial hatred as an essential component, but it is structural rather than just ideological. Since all of the institutions, the culture, and the socioeconomic system of U.S. Capitalism are based on white supremacy, how then is it possible to truly fight the rule of Capital without being forced to defeat white supremacy? The dual-tier economy of whites on top and Blacks on the bottom (even with all the class differences among whites) has successfully resisted every attempt by radical social movements. These reluctant reformers have danced around the issue. While winning reforms, in many cases primarily for white workers only, these white radicals have yet to topple the system and open the road to social revolution.

The fight against white skin privilege also requires the rejection of the vicious identification of North Americans as "white" people, rather than as Welsh, German, Irish, etc. as their national origin. This "white race" designation is a contrived super-nationality designed to inflate the social importance of European ethnics and to enlist them as tools in the Capitalist system of exploitation. In North America, white skin has always implied freedom and privilege: freedom to gain employment, to travel, to obtain social mobility out of one's born class standing, and a whole world of Eurocentric privileges. Therefore, before a social revolution can take place, there must be an abolition of the social category of the "white race." (with few exceptions in this essay, I will begin referring to them as "North Americans.")

These "white" people must engage in class suicide and race treachery before they can truly be accepted as allies of Black and nationally oppressed workers; the whole idea behind a "white race " is conformity and making them accomplices to mass murder and exploitation. If white people do not want to be saddled with the historical legacy of colonialism, slavery and genocide themselves, then they must rebel against it. So the "whites" must denounce the white identity and its system of privilege, and they must struggle to redefine themselves and their relationship with others. As long as white society, (through the State which says it is acting in the name of white people), continues to oppress and dominate all the institutions of the Black community, racial tension will continue to exist, and whites generally will continue to be seen as the enemy.

So what do North Americans start to do to defeat racial opportunism, white skin privileges and other forms of white supremacy? First they must break down the walls separating them from their non-white allies. Then together they must wage a fight against inequality in the workplace, communities, and in the social order. Yet it not just the democratic rights of African people we are referring to when we are talking about "national oppression." If that were the whole issue, then maybe more reforms could obtain racial and social equality. But no, that is not what we are talking about.

Blacks (or Africans in America) are colonised. America is a mother country with an internal colony. For Africans in America, our situation is one of total oppression. No people are truly free until they can determine their own destiny. Ours is a captive, oppressed colonial status that must be overthrown, not just smashing ideological racism or denial of civil rights. In fact, without smashing the internal colony first means the likelihood of a continuance of this oppression in another form. We must destroy the social dynamic of a very real existence of America being made up of an oppressor white nation and an oppressed Black nation (in fact there are several captive nations).

This requires the Black Liberation movement to liberate a colony, and this is why it is not just a simple matter of Blacks just joining with white Anarchists to fight the same type of battle against the State. That is also why Anarchists cannot take a rigid position against all forms of Black nationalism (especially revolutionary groups like the Black Panther Party), even if there are ideological differences about the way some of them are formed and operate. But North Americans must support the objectives of racially oppressed liberation movements, and they must directly challenge and reject white skin privilege. There is no other way and there is a shortcut; white supremacy is a huge stumbling block to revolutionary social change in North America.

The Black Revolution and other national liberation movements in North America are indispensable parts of the overall Social revolution. North American workers must join with Africans, Latinos and others to reject racial injustice, Capitalist exploitation, and national oppression. North American workers certainly have an important role in helping those struggles to triumph. Material aid alone, which can be assembled by white workers for the Black revolution, could dictate the victory or defeat of that struggle at a particular stage.

I am taking time to explain all this, because predictably some Anarchist purists will try to argue me down that having a white movement is a good thing, that Blacks and other oppressed nationalities just need to climb aboard the "Anarchist Good Ship" (a ship of fools?), and all of this is just "Marxist national liberation nonsense." Well, we know part of the reason for an Anarchist anti-racist movement is to challenge this chauvinist perspective right in the middle of our own movement. An Anarchist Anti- Racist Federation would not exist just to fight Nazis. We need to challenge and correct racist and doctrinaire positions on race and class within our movement. If we cannot do that, then we cannot organise the working class, Black or white, and are of no use to anyone.

Where is the Black struggle and where should it be going?

Some -- usually comfortable Black middle class professionals, politicians or businessmen who rode the 1960s Civil rights movement into power or prominence - will say there is no longer any necessity to struggle in the streets during the 1990s for Black freedom. They say we have "arrived" and are now "almost free." They say our only struggle now is to "integrate the money,"

or win wealth for themselves and members of their social class, even though they give lip service to "empowering the poor." Look, they say, we can vote, our Black faces are all over TV in commercials and situation comedies, there are hundreds of Black millionaires, and we have political representatives in the halls of Congress and State houses all over the land. In fact, they say, there are currently over 7,000 Black elected officials, several of whom preside over the largest cities in the nation, and there is even a governor of a Southern state, who is an African-American. That's what they say. But does this tell the whole story?

The fact is we are in as bad or even worse a shape, economically and politically, as when the Civil rights movement began in the 1950s. One in every four Black males are in prison, on probation, parole, or under arrest; at least one-third or more of Black family units are now single parent families mired in poverty; unemployment hovers at 18-25 percent for Black communities; the drug economy is the number one employer of Black youth; most substandard housing units are still concentrated in Black neighbourhoods; Blacks and other non-whites suffer from the worst health care; and Black communities are still underdeveloped because of racial discrimination by municipal governments, mortgage companies and banks, who "redline" Black neighbourhoods from receiving community development, housing and small business loans which keep our communities poor. We also suffer from murderous acts of police brutality by racist cops which has resulted in thousands of deaths and wounding; and internecine gang warfare resulting in numerous youth homicides (and a great deal of grief). But what we suffer from most and what encompasses all of these ills is that fact that we are an oppressed people -- in fact a colonised people subject to the rule of an oppressive government. We really have no rights under this system, except that which we have fought for and even that is now in peril. Clearly we need a new mass Black protest movement to challenge the government and corporations, and expropriate the funds needed for our communities to survive.

Yet for the past 25 years the revolutionary Black movement has been on the defensive. Due to cooptation, repression and betrayals of the Black Liberation movement of the 1960s, today's movement has suffered a series of setbacks and has now become static in comparison. This may be because it is just now getting its stuff together after being pummelled by the State's police agencies, and also because of the internal political contradictions which arose in the major Black revolutionary groups like the Black Panther Party, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC or "snick' as it was called in those days), and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. I believe all were factors that led to the destruction of the 1960's Black left in this country. Of course, many blame this period of relative inactivity in the Black movement on the lack of forceful leaders in the mould of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, etc., while other people blame the "fact" the Black masses have allegedly become "corrupt and apathetic," or just need the "correct revolutionary line."

Whatever the true facts of the matter, it can clearly be seen that the government, the Capitalist corporations, and the racist ruling class are exploiting the current weakness and confusion of the Black movement to make an attack on the Black working class, and are attempting to totally strip the gains won during the Civil rights era. In addition there is a resurgence of racism and conservatism among broad layers of the white population, which is a direct result of this right-wing campaign. Clearly this is a time when we must entertain new ideas and new tactics in the freedom struggle.

The ideals of Anarchism are something new to the Black movement and have never really been examined by Black and other non-white activists. Put simply, it means the people themselves

should rule, not governments, political patties, or self-appointed leaders in their name. Anarchism also stands for the self-determination of all oppressed peoples, and their right to struggle for freedom by any means necessary.

So what road is in order for the Black movement? Continue to depend on opportunistic Democratic hack politicians like Bill Clinton or Ted Kennedy; the same old group of middle class sell-out "leaders" of the Civil rights lobby; one or another of the authoritarian Leninist sects, who insist that they and they alone have the correct path to "revolutionary enlightenment"; or finally building a grassroots revolutionary protest movement to fight the racist government and rulers?

Only the Black masses can finally decide the matter, whether they will be content to bear the brunt of the current economic depression and the escalating racist brutality, or will lead a fight back. Anarchists trust the best instincts of the people, and human nature dictates that where there is repression there will be resistance; where there is slavery, there will a struggle against it. The Black masses have shown they will fight, and when they organise they will win!

A Call for a New Black Protest Movement

Those Anarchists who are Black like myself recognise there has to be a whole new social movement, which is democratic, on the grassroots level and is self-activated. It will be a movement independent of the major political parties, the State and the government. It must be a movement that, although it seeks to expropriate government money for projects that benefit the people, does not recognise any progressive role for the government in the lives of the people. The government will not free us, and is part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In fact only the Black masses themselves can wage the Black freedom struggle, not a government bureaucracy (like the U.S. Justice Department), reformist civil rights leaders like Jesse Jackson, or a revolutionary vanguard party on their behalf.

Of course, at a certain historical moment, a protest leader can play a tremendous revolutionary role as a spokesperson for the people's feelings, or even produce correct strategy and theory for a certain period, (Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, and Martin Luther King, Jr. come to mind), and a "vanguard party" may win mass support and acceptance among the people for a time (e.g., the Black Panther Party of the 1960s), but it is the Black masses themselves who will make the revolution, and, once set spontaneously in motion, know exactly what they want.

Though leaders may be motivated by good or bad, even they will act as a brake on the struggle, especially if they lose touch with the freedom aspirations of the Black masses. Leaders can only really serve a legitimate purpose as an advisor and catalyst to the movement, and should be subject to immediate recall if they act contrary to the people's wishes. In that kind of limited role they are not leaders at all -- they are community organisers.

The dependence of the Black movement on leaders and leadership (especially the Black bourgeoisie) has led us into a political dead end. We are expected to wait and suffer quietly until the next messianic leader asserts himself, as if he or she were "divinely missioned" (as some have claimed to be). What is even more harmful is that many Black people have adopted a slavish psychology of "obeying and serving our leaders," without considering what they themselves are capable of doing. Thus, rather than trying to analyze the current situation and carrying on Brother Malcolm X's work in the community, they prefer to bemoan the brutal facts, for year after year, of how he was taken away from us. Some mistakenly refer to this as a leadership vacuum." The fact is there has not been much movement in the Black revolutionary movement

since his assassination and the virtual destruction of groups like the Black Panther Party. We have been stagnated by middle class reformism and misunderstanding.

We need to come up with new ideas and revolutionary formations in how to fight our enemies. We need a new mass protest movement. It is up to the Black masses to build it, not leaders or political parties. They cannot save us. We can only save ourselves

What form will this movement take?

If there was one thing learned by anarchist revolutionary organisers in the 1960s, you don't organise a mass movement or a social revolution just by creating one central organisation such as a vanguard political party or a labour union. Even though Anarchists believe in revolutionary organisation, it is a means to an end, instead of the ends itself. In other words, the Anarchist groups are not formed with the intention of being permanent organisations to seize power after a revolutionary struggle. But rather to be groups which act as a catalyst to revolutionary struggles, and which try to take the people's rebellions, like the 1992 Los Angeles revolt, to a higher level of resistance.

Two features of a new mass movement must be the intention of creating dual power institutions to challenge the state, along with the ability to have a grassroots autonomist movement that can take advantage of a pre - revolutionary situation to go all the way.

Dual power means that you organise a number of collectives and communes in cities and town all over North America, which are, in fact, liberated zones, outside of the control of the government. Autonomy means that the movement must be truly independent and a free association of all those united around common goals, rather than membership as the result of some oath or other pressure.

So how would Anarchists intervene in the revolutionary process in Black neighbourhoods? Well, obviously North American or 'white" Anarchists cannot go into Black communities and just proselytise, but they certainly should work with any non-white Anarchists and help them work in communities of colour. (I do think that the example of the New Jersey Anarchist Federation and its loose alliance with the Black Panther movement in that state is an example of how we must start.) And we are definitely not talking about a situation where Black organisers go into the neighbourhood and win people to Anarchism so that they can then be controlled by whites and some party. This is how the Communist Party and other Marxist groups operate, but it cannot be how Anarchists work. We spread Anarchists beliefs not to "take over" people, but to let them know how they can better organise themselves to fight tyranny and obtain freedom. 'We want to work with them as fellow human beings and allies, who have their own experiences, agendas, and needs. The idea is to get as many movements of people fighting the state as possible, since that is what brings the day of freedom for us all a little closer.

There needs to be some sort of revolutionary organisation for Anarchists to work on the local level, so we will call these local groups Black Resistance Committees. Each one of these Committees will be Black working class social revolutionary collectives in the community to fight for Black rights and freedom as part of the Social revolution The Committees would have no leader or "party boss," and would be without any type of hierarchy structure, it would also be anti-authority. They exist to do revolutionary work, and thus are not debating societies or a club to elect Black politicians to office. They are revolutionary political formations, which will be linked with other such groups all over North America and other parts of the world in a larger

movement called a federation. A federation is needed or coordinate the actions of such groups, to let others know what is happening in each area, and to set down widespread strategy and tactics. (We will call this one, for wont of a better name, the "African Revolutionary Federation," or it can be part of a multicultural federation). A federation of the sort I am talking about is a mass membership organisation which will be democratic and made up of all kinds of smaller groups and individuals- But this is not a government or representative system I am talking about; there would be no permanent positions of power, and even the facilitators of internal programs would be subject to immediate recall or have a regular rotation of duties. When a federation is no longer needed, it can be disbanded Try that with a Communist party or one of the major Capitalist parties in North America!

Revolutionary strategy and tactics

If we are to build a new Black revolutionary protest movement we must ask ourselves how we can hurt this Capitalist system, and how have we hurt it in the past when we have led social movements against some aspect of our oppression. Boycotts, mass demonstrations, rent strikes, picketing, work strikes, sit-ins, and other such protests have been used by the Black movement at different times in its history, along with armed self-defence and open rebellion. Put simply, what we need to do is take our struggle to an new and higher level: we need to take these tried and true tactics, (which have been used primarily on the local level up to this point), an utilise them on a national level and then couple them with as yet untried tactics, for a strategic attack on the major Capitalist corporations and governmental apparatus.

We shall discuss a few of them:

A Black Tax Boycott

Black people should refuse to pay any taxes to the racist government, including federal income, estate and sales taxes, while being subjected to exploitation and brutality. The rich and their corporations pay virtually no taxes; it is the poor and workers who bear the brunt of taxation. Yet they receive nothing in return. There are still huge unemployment levels in the Black community, the unemployment and welfare benefits are paltry; the schools am dilapidated; public housing is a disgrace, while rents by absentee landlord properties are exorbitant-all these conditions and more are supposedly corrected by government taxation of income, goods, and services. Wrong! It goes to the Pentagon, defence contractors, and greedy consultants who, like vultures, prey on business with the government.

The Black Liberation movement should establish a mass tax resistance movement to lead a Black tax boycott as a means of protest and also as a method to create a fund to finance black community projects and organisations. Why should we continue to voluntarily support our own slavery? A Black tax boycott is just another means of struggle that the Black movement should examine and adopt, which is similar to the peace movement's "war tax resistance." Blacks should be exempted from all taxation on personal property, income taxes, stocks and bonds (the latter of which would be a new type of community development issuance). Tax the Rich!

A National Rent Strike and Urban Squatting

Hand-in-glove with a tax boycott should be a refusal to pay rent for dilapidated housing. These rent boycotts have been used to great effect to fight back against rent gouging by landlords. At one time they were so effective in Harlem (NY) that they caused the creation of rent control legislation, preventing evictions, unjustified price increases, and requiring reasonable upkeep by the owners and the property management company. A mass movement could bring a rent strike to areas (such as in the. Southeast and Southwest where poor people are being ripped of by the greedy landlords, but are not familiar with such tactics. Unfair laws now on the books, so-called Landlord -Tenant (where the only "right" the tenants have is to pay the rent or be evicted) should also be liberalised or overturned entirely. These laws only help slumlords stay in business, and keep exploiting the poor and working class They account for mass evictions, which in turn account for homelessness. We should fight to rollback rents, prevent mass evictions, and house the poor and the homeless in decent affordable places.

Besides the refusal to pay the slumlords and exploitative banks and property management companies, there should be a campaign of "urban squatting" to just take over the housing, and have the tenants run it democratically as a housing collective. Then that money which would have gone toward rent could now go into repairing the dwelling of tenants. The homeless, poor persons needing affordable housing, and others who badly need housing should just take over any abandoned housing owned by an absentee landlord or even a bearded-up city housing project. Squatting is an especially good tactic in these times of serious housing shortages and arson-for-insurance by the slumlords. We should throw the bums out and just take over! Of course we will probably have to fight the cops and crooked landlords who will try to use strong-arm tactics, but we can do that too! We can win significant victories if we organise a nationwide series of rent strikes, and build an independent tenants movement that will self- manage all the facilities, not on behalf of the government (with the tricky "Kemp plan"), but on behalf of themselves!

A Boycott of American Business

It was proven that one of the strongest weapons of the Civil rights movement was a Black consumer boycott of a community's merchants and public services. Merchants and other businessmen, of course, are the "leading citizens" of any community, and the local ruling class and boss of the government. In the 1960s when Blacks refused to trade with merchants as long as they allowed racial discrimination, their loss of revenue drove them to make concessions, and mediate the struggle, even hold the cops and the Klan at bay. What is true at the local level is certainly true at the national level. The major corporations and elite families run the country; the government is its mere tool. Blacks spend over $350 billion a year in this Capitalist economy as consumes, and could just as easily wage economic warfare against the corporate structure with a well planned boycott to win political concessions. For instance, a corporation like General Motors is heavily dependent upon Black consumes, which means that it is very vulnerable to a boycott, if one were organised and supported widely. If Blacks would refuse to buy GM cars, it would result in significant losses for the corporation, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Something like this could even bring a company to its knees. Yet the revolutionary wing of the Black movement has yet to use boycotts, calling it "reformism" and outdated.

But far from being an outdated tactic that we should abandon, boycotts have become even more effective in the last few years. In 1988, the Black and progressive movement in the United States hit on another tactic, boycotting the tourist industries of whole cities and states which engaged in discrimination. This reflected on the one hand how many cities have gone from smokestack industries since the 1960s to tourism as their major source of revenue, and on the other hand, a recognition by the movement that economic warfare was a potent weapon against discriminatory governments. The 1990-1993 Black Boycott against the Miami Florida tourism industry and the current Gay rights boycott against the State of Colorado (started in 1992) have been both successful and have gotten worldwide attention to the problems in their communities. In fact, boycotts have been expanded to cover everything from California grapes, beer (Coors), a certain brand of Jeans, all products made in the country of South Africa, a certain meat industry, and many things in between. Boycotts are more popular today than they ever have been

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recognised the potential revolutionary power of a national Black boycott of America's major corporations, which is why he established "Operation Breadbasket" shortly before an assassin killed him. This organisation, with offices in Chicago was designed to be the conduit for the funds that the corporations were going to be forced to pour money into for a national Black community development project for poor communities. And although he was assassinated before this could happen, we must continue his work in this matter. All over the country Black Boycott offices should be opened! We should build it into a mass movement, involving all sectors of our people. We should demonstrate, picket, and sit-in at meetings and offices of target corporations all over the country We must take it to their very doorstep and stop their looting of the Black community.

A Black General Strike

Because of the role they play in production, Black workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the Black community in the struggle for Black freedom. The vast majority of the Black community is working class people. Barring the disproportionate numbers of unemployed, about 11 million Black men and women are today part of the work force of the United States. About 5 -6 million of these are in basic industry, such as steel and metal fabrication, retail trades, food production and processing, meatpacking, the automobile industry, railroading, medical service and communications. Blacks number 1/3 to 1/2 of the basic blue-collar workers, and 1/3 of clerical labourers. Black labour is therefore very important to the Capitalist economy.

Because of this vulnerability to job actions by Black workers, who are some of the most militant workers on the job, they could take a leading role in a protest campaign against racism and class oppression If they are properly organised they would be a class vanguard within our movement since they are at the point of production. Black workers could lead a nationwide General Strike at their place of work as a protest against racial discrimination in jobs and housing, the inordinately high levels of Black unemployment brutal working conditions, and to further the demands of the Black movement generally. This general strike is a Socialist strike, not just a strike for higher wages and over general working conditions; it is revolutionary in politics using other means. This general strike can take the form of industrial sabotage, factory occupations or sit-ins, work slowdowns, wildcats, and other work stoppages as a protest to gain concessions on the local and national level and restructure the workplace and win the 4-hour day for North American labour. The strike would not only involve workers on the job, but also Black commu-

nity and progressive groups to give support with picket line duty, leaflet - ing and publishing strike support newsletters, demonstrations at company offices and work sites, along with other activities.

It will take some serious community and workplace organising to bring a general strike off in workplaces all over the country. Black workers should organise General Strike Committees at the workplaces, and Black Strike Support Committees to carry on the strike work inside the Black community itself. Because such a strike would be especially hard-fought and vicious, Black workers should organise Workers' Defence Committees to defend workers fired or black listed by the bosses for their industrial organising work. This defence committee would publicise a victimised worker's case and rally support from other workers and the community. The defence committee would also establish, a Labour strike and defence fund and also start food cooperative to financially and material support such victim ised workers and their families while carrying on the strike.

Although there will definitely be an attempt to involve white workers where they are willing to cooper ate, the strike would be under Black leadership because only Black workers can effectively raise those issues which most effect them. White workers have to support the democratic rights of Blacks and other nationally oppressed labourers, instead of just white rights campaigns" on so-called "common economic issues," led by the North American left. In addition to progressive North American individuals or union caucuses, the labour union locals themselves should be recruited, but they are not the force to lead this struggle, although their help can be indispensable in a particular campaign. It takes major organising to make them break free of their racist and conservative nature. So although we want and need the support of our fellow workers of other nationalities and genders, it is ridiculous and condescending to just tell Black workers to sit around and wait for a "white workers vanguard" to decide it wants to fight. We will educate our fellow workers to the issues and why they should fight white supremacy at our side, but we will not defer our struggle for anyone! WE MUST ORGANISE THE GENERAL STRIKE FOR BLACK FREEDOM!

The Commune: Community Control of the Black Community.

"How do we raise a new revolutionary consciousness against a system programmed against our old methods? We must use a new approach and revolutionise the Black Central City Commune, and slowly provide the people with the incentive to fight by allowing them to create programs, which will meet all their social, political, and economic, needs. We must fill the vacuums left by the established order... In return, we must teach them the benefits of our revolutionary ideals. We must build a subsistence economy, and a socio-political infrastructure so that we can become an example for all revolutionary people. "... George Jackson, in his book BE

The idea behind a mass commune is to create a dual power structure as a counter to the government, under conditions, which exist now. In fact, Anarchists believe the first step toward self-determination and the Social revolution is Black control of the Black community. This means that Black people must form and unify their own organisations of struggle, take control of the existing Black communities and all the institutions within them, and conduct a consistent fight to overcome every form of economic, political and cultural servitude, and any system of racial and class inequality which is the product of this racist Capitalist society.

The realisation of this aim means that we can build inner-city Communes, which will be centres of Black counter-power and social revolutionary culture against the white political power structures in the principal cities of the United States. Once they assume hegemony, such communes would be an actual alternative to the State and serve as a force to revolutionise African people - and by extension large segments of American society, which could not possibly remain immune to this process. It would serve as a living revolutionary example to North American progressives and other oppressed nationalities.

There is tremendous fighting power in the Black community, but it is not organised in a structured revolutionary way to effectively struggle and take what is due. The white Capitalist ruling class recognises this, which is why it pushes the fraud of "Black Capitalism" and Black politicians and other such "responsible leaders". These fakes and sellout artists lead us to the dead-end road of voting and praying for that which we must really be willing to fight for. The Anarchists recognise the Commune as the primary organ of the new society, and as an alternative to the old society. But the Anarchists also recognise that Capitalism will not give up without a fight; it will be necessarily to economically and politically cripple Capitalist America. One thing for sure we should not continue to passively allow this system to exploit and oppress us.

The commune is a staging ground for Black revolutionary struggle. For instance, Black people should refuse to pay taxes to the racist government, should boycott the Capitalist corporations, should lead a Black General Strike all over the country, and should engage in an insurrection to drive the police out and win a liberated zone. This would be a powerful method to obtain submission to the demands of the movement, and weaken the power of the state. We can even force the government to make money available for community development as a concession; instead of as a payoff to buy-out the struggle as happened in the 1960s and thereafter. If we put a gun to a banker's head and said "We know you've got the money, now give it up," he would have to surrender. Now the question is: if we did the same thing to the government, using direct action means with an insurrectionary mass movement, would these would both be acts of expropriation? Or is it just to pacify the community why they gave us the money? One thing for sure, we definitely need the money, and however we compel it from the government, is of less important than the fact that we forced them to give it up to the people's forces at all. We would then use that money to rebuild our communities, maintain our organisations, and care for the needs of our people. It could be a major concession, a victory.

But we have also got to realise that Africans in America are not simply oppressed by force of arms, but that part of the moral authority of the state comes from the mind of the oppressed that consent to the right to be governed. As long as Black people believe that some moral or political authority of the white government has legitimacy in their lives, that they owe a duty to this nation as citizens, or even that they are responsible for their own oppression, then they cannot effectively fight back. They must free their minds of the ideas of American patriotism and begin to see themselves as a new people.

This can only be accomplished under dual power, where the patriotism of the people for the state is replaced with love and support for the new Black commune. We do that by making the Commune a real thing in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.

We should establish community councils to make policy decisions and administer the affairs of the Black community. These councils would be democratic neighbourhood assemblies composed of representative elected by Black workers in various community institutions - factories, hospitals schools - as well as delegates elected on a block basis. We must reject Black Mayors and other

politicians, or government bureaucrats, as a substitute for community power. We must therefore have community control of all the institutions of the Black community, instead of just letting the State decide what is good for us. Not just jobs and housing, but also full control over schools, hospitals, welfare cents, libraries, etc., must turned over to that community, because only the residents of a community have a true understanding of its needs and desires.

Here is an example of how it would work: we would elect a community council to supervise all schools in the Black community. We would encourage parents, students, teachers, and the community at-large to work cooperatively in every phase of school administration, rather than have an authority figure like a principal and his/her uncaring bureaucratic administration run things as are done at present.

The whole Black community will have to engage in a militant struggle to take over the public schools and turn them into centres of Black culture and learning. We cannot continue to depend on the racist or Black puppet school boards to do this for us.

The local council would then be federated, or joined together, on a local level to create a citywide group of councils who would run affairs in that community. The councils and other neighbourhood collectives organised for a variety of reasons would make a mass commune. This commune would be in turn federated at the regional and national level the aim being to create a national federation of Black communes, which would meet periodically in one or a number of mass assembly meetings. This federation would be composed of elected or appointed delegates representing their local commune or council. Such a national federal of communes would allow community councils from all over North America to work out common policies and speak with one voice on all matters affecting their communities or regions. It would thus have far more power than any single community council could. However, to prevent this national federation from bureaucratic usurpation of power by political factions or opportunistic leaders, elections should be held regularly and delegates would be subject to recall at any time for misconduct, so that they remain under the control of the local communities they represent.

The Black community councils are really a type of grassroots movement made up of all the social formations of our people, the block and neighbourhood committees, Labour, student and youth groups, (even the church, to a limited degree), social activist groups, and others to unite the various protest actions around a common program of struggle for this period. The campaigns for this period must utilise the tactics of direct mass action, as it is very important that the people themselves must realise a sense of their organised power. These grassroots associations will provide to the usually mass spontaneous actions, a form of organisation whose social base is of the Black working class, instead of the usual Black middle class mis-leadership.

The Anarchists recognise these community councils as being a form of direct democracy, instead of the type of phoney American "democracy," which is really nothing but control by politicians and businessmen. The councils are especially important because, they provide embryonic self- rule and the beginnings of an alternative to the Capitalist economic system and its government 11 is a way to undermine the government and make it an irrelevant dinosaur, because its services are no longer needed.

The Commune is also a Black revolutionary counterculture. It is the embryo of the new Black revolutionary society in the body of the old sick, dying one. It is the new lifestyle in microcosm, which contains the new Black social values and the new communal organisations, and institutions, which will become the socio-political infrastructure of the free society.

Our objective is to teach new Black social values of unity and struggle against the negative effects of white Capitalist society and culture. To do that we must build the Commune into a Black Consciousness movement to build race pride and respect, race and social awareness and to struggle against the Capitalist slave masters. This Black communalism would be both a repository of Black culture and ideology. We need to change both our lives and our lifestyles, in order to deal with the many interpersonal contradictions that exist in our community. We could examine the Black family, Black male/ female relationships, the mental health of the Black community, relations between the community and the white establishment and among Black people themselves. We would hold Black consciousness raising sessions in schools, community centres, prisons and in Black communities all over North America-which would teach Black history and culture, new liberating social ideas and values to children and adults, as well as counselling and therapy techniques to resolve family and marital problems, all the while giving a Black revolutionary perspective to the issues of the day. Our people must be made to see that the self-hatred, disunity, distrust, internecine violence and oppressive social conditions among Black people are the result of the legacy of African slavery and the present day effects of Capitalism. Finally the main objective of Black revolutionary culture is to agitate and organise Black people to struggle for their freedom.

As Steve Biko, the murdered South African revolutionary, has been quoted as saying:

"The call for Black consciousness is the most positive call to come from ally group in the Black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of whites by Blacks… At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by Black that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled try the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there is nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters… The philosophy of Black consciousness, therefore expresses group pride and the determination by Blacks to rise up and attain the envisaged self:"

By the "envisaged self," Biko refers to the Black self, a liberated psyche. It is that which we want to rescue with such a Black consciousness movement here in America. We need to counter Black self- hatred and the frivolous "party" mentality. We also want to end the social degradation of our community, and rid it of drug addiction, prostitution, Black-on-Black crime, and other social evils that destroys the moral fibre of the Black community. Drugs and prostitution are mainly controlled by organised crime, and protected by the police, who accept bribes and gifts from gangsters. These negative social values, the so-called "dog-eat-dog" philosophy of the Capitalist system teaches people to be individualists of the worst sort. Willing to commit any kind of crime against each other, and to take advantage of each other. This oppressive culture is what we are fighting. As long as it exists, it will be hard to unify the people around a revolutionary political program.

Building A Black survival program.

But there must also be some way to ensure their economic survival, in addition to providing new cultural role models. It is then when the Commune, a network of community organisations and institutions, assumes its greatest importance. We will build a socio-political infrastructure to intervene in every area of Black life: food and housing cooperatives, Black Liberation schools, people's banks and community mutual aid funds, medical clinics and hospitals, rodent control

and pest extermination programs, cooperative factories, community cultural and entertainment centres, the establishment of an intercommunal electronic communications network, land and building reclamation projects, public works brigades to rebuild the cities, youth projects, drug clinics, and many other such programs.

All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the Black community, but they are not solutions to our problems, because although we can build a survival economy now, we have to realise it will take a social revolution to overthrow Capitalism and obtain full economic self-sufficiency. But they will help us to organise the Black community around a true analysis and understand of their situation. This is why they are called survival programs, meaning surviving under this system pending a social revolution. Building consciousness and revolutionary culture means taking on realistic day-to-day issues, like hunger, the need for clothing and housing, joblessness, transportation and other issues. It means that the Commune must fill in the vacuum where people are not being properly fed clothed, provided with adequate medical treatment or are otherwise being deprived of basic needs.

Contrary to the rhetoric of some leftist groups, this will not make people passive or just dependent on us. Rather than struggling against the government and demanding those things, it inspires confidence in the revolutionary forces and exposes the government as uncaring and incompetent. That is more of an incentive for the people to revolt and overthrown the government than balding political pep rallies, giving speeches, running for public office, and publishing manifestos and resolutions or party newspapers and other garbage (that no one reads but their own members), like most Black and radical groups do now.

We need a new way of confronting our oppressed situation. We need to unite out people to fight, and to do that we need to educate, agitate and organise. That's the only way we'll win a new world. What follows is an example of the and of survival program I mean:

We must have community control of all businesses and financial institutions located in our communities, and for those businesses not working in our best interests or not returning some of its revenue back to the community, we will seize said businesses and turn them into community cooperatives and mutual aid banking societies.

We must have community control of all housing and major input in all community planning of Black communities. If a piece of property or house is owned by a slumlord (either a private Realtor or government agency), we will seize it and turn it into community housing cooperatives. We oppose Urban Renewal, spatial decomposition, yuppie gentrification and other such racist schemes to drive us out of the cities. W must have complete control of all planning boards affecting and concerning the Black community. To enforce these demands, we should lead rent strikes, demonstrations, armed actions and urban squatting to drive landlords out and take over the property.

We must have an independent self-sustaining economy to guarantee full employment for all our people. We demand that the U.S. government provide massive economic aid to rebuild the cities. The government spends billions per year for the Pentagon killing machine. At least that amount should be redirected to meet the needs of America's oppressed communities. Ghetto housing must be rebuilt and turned over to the occupants. Adequate jobs and services must be provided to all community residents including first preference for all construction jobs in the Black community, when public works brigades are assigned to rebuild the cities. We must fight for Black grassroots control of all government funds allocated to the Black community through a

network of mutual aid banking societies, community development corporations, and community development credit unions.

Reparations: the Big Payback. The United States government and the rich class of this country has stolen and oppressed Africans in this continent for decades. They worked our ancestors as slaves, and after slavery they continued to oppress, murder and exploit our people, on down to the present day. We must build a mass movement in our communities to compel the government and the rich to provide the means for our community redevelopment. They owe us for centuries of abuse and robbery! We must demand that reparations, in the form of community development money and other funds, be provided and placed in credit unions, cooperatives, and other mutual aid institutions in the Black community, so that we can start to obtain some measure of economic self sufficiency. Yet we know that they won't give the money to us. We must fight them for it, just like we must struggle to overturn the system of wage slavery today.

End police brutality. We must organise self-defence units to protect the Black community and its organisations, and remove the State's police farces. We demand criminal prosecution and jailing of all brutal or killer cops. No jurisdiction for the State's judicial system in Black liberated zones.

We must undertake a large-scale program to train Black people as doctors, nurses and medical para-

professionals in order to make free quality medical and dental care available to Black people. We must demand that the government subsidise all such medical and dental training, as web as for the operation of clinics, but Black people themselves must establish and run the free medical clinics in all Black communities whether urban or rural. This would include community anti-drug programs and drug rehabilitation clinics.

We must establish a Black community-controlled food system for self-sufficiency and as a way of fighting to end hunger and malnutrition, including a trucking network, warehouses, communal farms, farmers' cooperatives, food cooperatives, agricultural unions, and other collective associations. This will include a protest campaign challenging the theft of Black farmland by agribusiness corporations and rich white "land barons" and reclaiming it for our projects. This is especially important now that the U.S. has entered an economic crisis that will not be able to provide for our needs. We must force the government to provide the money for many of these projects, to be administered under our total control, instead of by a government agency.

The Black community must have control of its entire educational system from the nursery school through college. We must establish a Black Liberation educational system which meets the training needs of Black children, prepares them for job training and future economic security, service to their community, and gives them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of the true history and culture of African people; as well as a program of adult education for community people whose earlier educational opportunities have been stunted. We should demand free higher education for Blacks and other minorities at full government expense, including remedial training programs for all who wish to qualify.

We must demand and fight for the release of all Black political prisoners and victims of racial injustice, we must investigate and review the cases of all such prisoners who are the victims of government political repression and racist frame-ups, and lead a mass campaign for their release. Some of our best revolutionary organisers are rotting away in the prison houses of this land.

The central demand is for Black control of the Black community, it politics and economy. We have to take over the cities, establish municipal communes, and exercise self-government, as a

vital step. We are the majority in many of the major cities of this country and we should be able to control our own affairs (or at least obtain some autonomy), but as we should now be aware we won't ever get this community social power by voting for some Black Capitalist politician, or from passively depending for "salvation" on leaders of one sort or another. We have to do it ourselves if we are to ever get on the road to freedom.

The Need for a Black Labour Federation

The demand for Black labour has been the central economic factor in America; it was Black labour that built the foundations of this nation. Beginning with slave labour in the Old South on plantations, then with sharecropping and other farm labour after the Civil war, successive migration to the North and working mills, mine and factories during a 40 year period (1890- 1920), and on down to the present day, Black labour is important to the functioning of the Capitalist economic order. Almost from the beginning, Black workers have organised their own Labour unions and worker's associations to represent their interests: the National Coloured Labour Union in 1869, the national Coloured Farmer's Alliance (Populist) in the same year, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the 1940s, the league of Black Revolutionary Workers in the 1960s; the United Construction Workers Association and the Black

and Puerto Rican Coalition of Construction Workers in the 1970s, and on down to the present day with such unions or associations as the Black Workers for Justice and the Coalition for Black Trade Unionists. Some of these were unions, some were just associations of Black workers in existing unions .

In fact, the trade unions would not even exist today if it were not for the assistance and support of the Black worker. Trade unionism was born as an effective national movement amid the great convulsions of the Civil War and the fight to end slavery, yet Black workers were routinely excluded from unions like the American Federation of Labour. Only militant associations like the Knights, IWW and the Anarchist-initiated International Working People's Association (IWPA) would accept their memberships at all. This continued for many years, until the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) began its campaign of strikes, sit-downs, and other protest actions to organise the unskilled industrial workers. Black labour was pivotal in these battles, yet has never fully reaped the benefits. In fact, the Labour bosses betrayed them when the CIO was beaten down in the 1950s.

You would think that American labour movement would see it as criminal or racist to ignore these fellow workers today in that fashion. But even now there is no labour organisation in the U. S. which gives full representation and equal treatment to Black workers. The fact is that even with some Black Labour officials in office, Black workers receive far fewer union benefits than white workers, and are trapped in the most low-paid, tedious and dangerous jobs, even though they made substantial economic gains during the 1960s.

The majority of the Black masses are in the working class. Because of the role they play in production, Black industrial and clerical workers are potentially the most powerful sector of the Black community in the struggle for Black liberation. As the victims of inequality in the economy, Black workers have already begun to organise for their interests and protect their rights on the job, even if the union is conservative and won't fight the boss. They have formed union caucuses and even independent labour unions where necessary. Of course, the unity of Black and white workers is indispensable to combat and overthrow Capitalism. But where white workers are

now privileged and Black workers are penalised, Black unity and struggle must precede and prepare the ground for any Black-white unity on a broad scale. Black caucuses in the Unions can fight against discrimination in hiring, firing, and upgrading, and for equality of treatment in the unions, now, while white workers still have yet to widely support democratic rights for Black and other oppressed nationalities. Black Caucuses are important. Where they are part of organised labour, they should strive to democratise the unions, regenerate their fighting spirits, and eliminate white job trust practices. These Black caucuses in the unions should demand:

- Rank and file democratic control of the union.
- Equal rights and treatment for all unionists; eliminate all racist practices in the labour movement.
- Affirmative action programs to redress past racist employment practices, end racial discrimination based on seniority and other ploys.
- Full employment for all Blacks, women, and other non-white workers.
- A 20-30 hour workweek with no reduction in pay.
- The right to strike, including wildcat strikes without union sanction.
- Speedier and fair grievance procedures.
- An escalator clause in all union contracts to ensure automatic wage adjustments to keep up with the rising cost of living.
- Full payment of social security by employer and the government. Full unemployment compensation at 100 of base pay.
- Minimum wages at union scale.
- Prevent runaway shops, phoney bankruptcy, or "strategic plant shutdowns" by companies without notice to union or to gain advantage in contract negotiations.
- A public works program to rebuild the Black and other inner-city communities, and to provide work for Black workers.
- Worker's self-management of industry by factory committees and worker's councils, elected by the workers themselves.

In addition to the union caucuses, Black working people need a national Black workers association, which would be both a revolutionary union movement to do workplace organising, but also would be a mass social movement for community organising. Such a movement would combine the organising tactics to both the labour and Black Liberation movements. It is not designed to drive Blacks out of those unions where they are already organised, but would rather serve as a tool to multiply their numbers and strength, and turn their unions into militant, class struggle instruments.

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which organised Black auto workers during the late 1960s provides an example of the type of organisation needed The League, which grew out

of its major affiliate, the Dodge Revolutionary Movement (DRUM), was undoubtedly the most militant Black Labour movement in American history. It was a Black labour federation which existed as an organised alternative to the United Auto Workers, and was the inevitable step of taking the Black Liberation struggle to the industrial shop floor, the point of production, and Capitalism's most vulnerable area.

The League had wisely decided to organise in the Detroit automobile production industry. This was an industry where its workers were an important part of the workforce and also in the Detroit Black community, where the League united the struggle in the factories with that of the Black struggle as a whole. It quickly became a major force in the workplace and in the streets as many of its cadres organised on college campuses and in the Black inner-city areas. It had the potential to become a mass nationwide Black working class movement, but this potential was stifled through political faction fights among the leadership, lack of a solid organised base in the factories, company, UAW and State repression, organised racism and lack of cooperation among white workers, and other such reasons. Eventually the League split into mutually hostile factions and died, after less than five years of existence.

Even though the League was at best a revolutionary syndicalist organisation, and later a rigid Marxist - Leninist organisation (and their adoption of this later authoritarian ideology, with its ideas of purges and unquestioned leadership, directly lead to its demise) there is much that Anarchists and radical Black labour activists can learn from the League. The main thing is that Black workers can and should be organised into some sore of independent labour association, in addition to or even in lieu of, their

membership in organised labour unions and especially where the unions are of the sellout type and discriminates against Blacks. Also it is much easier for Black workers to organise other Black workers and their community in support of strikes and workplace organising. That is precisely why we need to establish a group like the League today, but as an Anarcho-Syndicalist organisation, so as to avoid the past pitfalls and ideological squabbles of Marxism-Leninism- Simply stated what would be the program of a newly formed National Federation of Black Workers?

- For class struggle against the bosses.
- To organise the unorganised Black workers ignored by the trade unions.
- For workers solidarity among all nationalities of workers.
- It should be an International Black Labour Federation!

From Detroit, Michigan to Durban, South Africa, from the Caribbean to Australia, from Brazil to England, Black workers are universally oppressed and exploited. The Black working class needs its own world labour organisation. There is no racial group more borne down by social restraint than Black workers; they are oppressed as workers and as a people. Because of these dual forms of oppression and the fact that most trade unions exclude or do not struggle for Black labourer's rights, we must organise for our own rights and liberation. Even though in many African and Caribbean countries there are "Black" labour federations, they are reformist or government-controlled. There is a large working class in many of these countries, but they have no militant labour organisations to lead the struggle. The building of a Black workers' movement for revolutionary industrial sabotage and a general strike, or organise the workers for self-

management of production, and so undermine and overthrow the government is the number one priority.

What would an international Black labour federation stand for? Firstly, since many Black workers, farmers, and peasants are not organised at all in most countries, such an organisation would be one big union of Black workers, representing every conceivable sill and vocation. Also such an organisation means the worldwide unity of Black workers, and then, secondly, it means coordinated international labour revolts. Capital and Labour have nothing in common.

The real strength of workers against Capital and the imperialist countries is economic warfare. A revolutionary general strike and boycott of the multinational corporations and their goods by Black workers all over the globe is how they can be hurt. For instance, if we want to make Britain and the USA withdraw financial and military support from South Africa then we use the weight and power of Black Labour in those countries to wage strikes, sabotage, boycott and other forms of political and economic struggle against those countries and the multinational companies involved. It would be r power to be reckoned with. For instance, coordinated actions by trade unions and political action groups in that country have already causes major-policy changes, a full-fledged general strike would likely lead to the total economic collapse of the racist South African state, especially if such strikes were supported by Black workers in North America.

In addition to asking the Black workers to form their own international labour federation and to organise rank-and-file committees within their existing trade unions to push them into a class struggle direction, we also invite Black workers to join Anarcho-Syndicalist labour organisations like the IWW and the International Workers'Association . But, of course, it is not intended to drive Black workers out of those unions where they are already active, but would rather serve as a tool to multiply their number and strength in such unions, and make them more militant.

Unemployment and Homelessness

In the first three months of 1993, the U.S. Labour Department's Bureau of labour Statistics listed official unemployment rates at about six million persons or just seven of the labour force. Under Capitalism half that figure is "normal" and nonsensically is considered by Capitalist economists as "full employment" even though this is millions of people consigned to economic poverty of the worst sort. But the government figures are intentionally conservative, and do not include those who have given up actively searching for jobs, the under employed (who can't make enough to live on), the part-time workers (who can't find a full time or steady job) and the homeless of which them are now between 3-5 million alone.

Of the 6 million people that the government does count as jobless now, less than 3 million are given any unemployment compensation or other federal or state aid; the rest are left to starve, steal or hustle for their survival. A person without a job under the Capitalist system is counted as nothing. Every worker has the human right to a job; yet under Capitalism, workers are dismissed form employment in times of business crisis, overproduction, depression or just to save labour costs through less workers and more speed-up. And some workers cannot find jobs in the Capitalist labour market because of lack of skills, or racial or social discrimination.

But the government's figures lie, private researchers state that the total number of people who want full time jobs and thus cannot find them amounts to nearly 14.3 million persons. Clearly then this is a crisis situation of broad proportions, but all the government is doing is juggling and hiding figures. But the figures do show that Blacks, Latinos, and women are bearing the brunt

of the current depression The National Urban League in its "Bidden Unemployment Index" (included as part of its annual "State of Black America" report) reports levels of 15-38 percent for Black adults 25 and older and incredible levels of 44-55% for teens and young adults 17-24 years. In fact, Black youth unemployment has not declined at all since the 1974-1975 recession. It has stayed at an official level of 35-40 percent, but in the major cities like Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, the real unemployment rate is more like 70 percent. For Black youth the unemployment rate is three to five times higher than that of white youth. Capitalism is making economic exiles of Black people as a whole. The fact is that unemployment is concentrated in the Black and Hispanic communities, and is greatly responsible for the most destructive tendencies inhuman relations and deteriorating neighbourhoods. Crime, prostitution, suicide, drug addiction, gang fighting, mental illness, alcoholism, and the break up of the Black family, and other social his-all are rooted in the lack of jobs and the denial of essential social services in their communities. It is actually racial genocide in the form of social neglect.

Unemployment is profitable for the bosses because it drives down the wages of workers and helps the employers to keep the workforce under control through this "reserve army of labour," which are allegedly always ready to scab. Because of pervasive discrimination against Blacks, Latinos and other nationally oppressed workers, including higher levels unemployment-the jobs they do get art generally on the bottom rung. This is also profitable for the boss, and divides the working class.

Homelessness is just the most intensified form of unemployment, where in addition to loss of job or income, there is loss of housing and lack of access to social services. There are now millions of people homeless since the last 15 years, because of the Capitalist offensive to destroy the unions, beat back the gains of the civil rights struggle, and do away with the affordable housing sector in favour of yuppie gentrification in the cities. You see them in cities, big and small, and what this reflects is a total breakdown in the Capitalist State's social services system, in addition to the heating up of the class war waged by government and the major corporations, It shows, more than anything, that Capitalism worldwide is undergoing an international financial panic, and is really in the beginning stages of a world depression. In addition to the 90 million persons who live below the poverty line and three to five million homeless in the U.S.; there are another 2.7 million homeless in the twelve nations of the European community, and 80 million people am living in poverty there, with millions more in the Capitalist countries of Japan, Korea and other parts of Asia. So although Black workers must organise and fight against homeless and unemployment in the U.S., clearly there must be an international movement of workers to fight this economic deprivation, as part of the overall class struggle. In every city in North America, the Black workers movement should organise unemployment councils to fight for unemployment benefits and jobs for the jobless, the building of decent, affordable low-income housing and an end to homelessness, as well as against racial discrimination in jobs and housing. Such councils would be democratic organisations, organised on a neighbourhood basis, (to ensure that it would be under the control of the people, and against infiltration and takeover by liberal or "radical" political parties, or co-optation by the government), which would be federated into a citywide, regional, and national organisation. That organisation would be a national Black unemployment league, to create a mass fight back movement in this depression. It would be made up of Black community unemployed councils from all over the country, with delegates elected from all the local groups. Such a national organisation could meet to map out a large-scale attack on unemployment, as well as serve as a national clearinghouse on Black unemployment conditions.

On the local level in the Black neighbourhoods, it would be the community unemployment councils which would establish food and housing cooperatives, lead rent strikes and squatting, initiate land and building reclamation projects, establish producer and consumer cooperatives, distribute food and clothing, and provide for other services: they would establish neighbourhood medical clinics for free treatment of the homeless and unemployed, rodent control programs, etc., and they would deal with community social problems (brought on by unemployment), and other issues of interest They would build hunger marches and other demonstrations and carry the people's wrath to various government offices and to the businesses of the rich. Not only would the unemployment councils be a way of fighting for jobs and unemployment benefits, but also the councils would a way to a obtain a great deal of community self-sufficiency and direct democracy, instead of totally depending on city hall, Congress or the President, and helps lead to the kind of confidence among the masses that a Black municipal commune becomes a serious possibility.

One of the most important functions of an unemployment movement is to obtain unity between the employed and unemployed or homeless, and workers solidarity across race lines. The employed and unemployed must work together to struggle against the Boss class if they are to obtain any serious gains during this period of economic crisis. Workers who are on strike or protesting against the boss would be supported by the unemployed, who would even man the picket lines with them and refuse to scab. In turn the workers would form unemployed caucus in their trade unions to allow union representation of these workers and also force such unions to provide food and other necessities, make funds and training available to the unemployed, as well as throw the weight of the unions in the fight for decent jobs and housing for all workers. The Capitalist bosses will not be moved otherwise. MAKE THE BOSSES PAY FOR THEIR ECONOMIC CRISIS!

Here is what a united movement of workers and homeless must demand:

- Full employment (zero unemployment) for all workers at union wage.
- Establishment of a shorter working week, so that workers would be paid at the rate for 40 hours of work for 20-30 hours a week on the job.
- End homelessness, build and make available decent affordable housing for all. Repeal all loitering, anti-panhandling and other laws against the homeless,
- End the war budget, and use those funds for decent, low-income housing, better schools, hospitals and clinics, libraries, parks and public transportation.
- End racism and sexism in job opportunities and relief benefits.
- Jobs or a guaranteed income for all.
- Full federal and state benefits for unemployed workers and their families, including corporate and government funds to pay the bills, rents and debts for any laid off worker, and unemployment compensation at 100% of regular paid wage, lasting the full length of a worker's period of unemployment.
- National minimum wage set at prevailing union entry wage.

- Government and corporate funds to establish a public works program to provide jobs (with full union rights and wage scale) to rebuild the inner cities and provide needed social services. The program and its funds should be under the control of committees democratically elected from poor and Black neighbourhoods, so as to avoid "poverty pimps" and rip off job agencies, or government bureaucrats.
- Free all persons in prison for crimes of economic survival.

These, and the demands previously mentioned, are merely a survival program and agenda for unemployed workers; the real answer is Social revolution the elimination of Capitalism, and workers' selfmanagement of the economy and society. This is a vital first step however. Them would be no unemployment or social need for wage labour in an Anarchist-Communist society.

Crimes Against the People

It is the rich who decide what is or is not a crime; it is not a neutral designation. The laws are written to protect the rich and those who act as agents of the State. But most personal crimes are not committed against the rich: they are usually inaccessible. It is poor and working class Black people who are the major victims of violent crime. The Black female is the primary victim of rape and abuse by the Black male in this country. The Black male himself is the leading homicide victim in the U.S. by another Black man like himself, and sadly our children are among the leading victims of child abuse, many times by his or her own parents. We do not like to think of these things in the Black community, but we are battering and killing ourselves at an alarming rate. This is not to deny that the Capitalist social system has created frustrating, degrading conditions of life that contribute to this brutality and fratricide, but we would be lax in our humane and revolutionary duty if we did not try to correct this problem on the short-term, and also make Black people assume responsibility for our actions. I am not talking some Black conservative or "law and order" garbage here, but rather recognition of fact that we have a problem.

We have an external and an internal crisis situation facing us in our community. The external crisis is racism and colonialism, which works to systematically oppress us and is responsible for whatever internal crisis there is. The internal crisis is the result of an environment where drugs and violence (both social and physical) are rampant, and life is sometimes considered cheap. Black-on-Black crimes and internal violence are destroying our community. It is undoubtedly self-hatred and the desperate economic and social conditions we live under which makes us prey on each other. Drugs, frustrated rage, prostitution and other vices are symptoms of oppression

We kill, beat, rape and brutalise each other because we are in pain ourselves. Thus we are acting out anti-social roles defined for us by someone else, not ourselves. In our pain and confusion we strike out at convenient and familiar victims; those like ourselves There are ordinary Black people who steal and rob just to survive under this system, because of that unequal distribution of wealth. Further, for same of us, in our desire to "make it" in Capitalist society we will stop at nothing, including murder.

And finally, there are those who do whatever they do because of drug addiction or mental sickness.

Whatever the reasons, we have a serious problem that we must remedy because it is tearing away at the moral and social fabric of our community. It will be impossible to unite Black people if they are in fear and hatred of one another. It is also obvious that the police and government

cannot rectify this problem and that only the Black community can do so. The courts and prison fail to prevent the situation from recurring.

Therefore what can we do?

It is the community, through its own organisations of concern, which will have to deal with this problem. Community self-managed programs to work with Black youth gang members, (a source of much violence in the community), rather than the military approach of calling in the cops, empower the community rather than the racist prison bureaucracy and the cops. Also, the community-run drug rehabilitation groups, therapy and counselling groups, and other neighbourhood organising help us to effectively deal with the problem of internal violence and hopefully defuse it. Most importantly it involves the community in the effort.

But we cannot totally depend upon counselling or rehabilitation techniques, especially where them is an immediate threat of violence or where it has occurred. So, to insure peace and public security, a Black community guard service would be organised for this purpose, as well as to protect against the white Power structure. This security force would be elected by local residents, and would work with the help of people in neighbourhoods. This is the only way it would work. It would not be an auxiliary of the current colonial occupation army in our community, and would not threaten or intimidate the community with violence against our youth. Nor would such a community guard protect vice and organised crime. This community guard would only represent the community that elected it, instead of city hall. Similar such units would be organised all over the city on a block-by-block basis.

Yet the Anarchists go further, and say that after a municipal commune is set up, the existing courts must be replaced by voluntary community tribunals of arbitration, and in cases of grave crimes, connected with murder, or offences against liberty and equality, a special communal court of a nonpermanent nature would be set up. Anarchists believe that antisocial crime, meaning anything that oppresses, robs, or does violence to the working class must be vigorously opposed. We cannot wait until after the revolution to oppose such dangerous enemies of the people. But since such antisocial crimes are a direct expression of Capitalism, there would be a real attempt to socialise, politically educate and rehabilitate offenders. Not by throwing them into the white Capitalist prisons to suffer like animals and where, because of their torture and humiliation, they will declare war on all society, but by involving them in the life of the community and giving them social and vocational training. Since all the "criminology experts" agree that crime is a social problem, and since we know that 88 percent of all crimes are against property and are committed in order to survive in an economically unjust society, we must recognise that only full employment, equal economic opportunity, decent housing and other aspects of social justice will ensure an end to crime. In short, we must have radical social change to eradicate the social conditions that cause crime. An unequal unfair society like Capitalism creates its own criminal class. The real thieves and murderers, businessmen and politicians, are protected under today's legal system, while the poor are punished. That is class justice, and that is what Social revolution would abolish.

But understandably, many persons want to end the rape, murder, and violence in our communities today, and wind up strengthening the hands of the State and its police agents. They will not get rid of crime, but the cops will militarily patrol our communities, and further turn us against one another. We must stay away from that trap. Frustrated and confused, Black people may attack one another, but instead of condemning them to a slow death in prison or shooting

them down in the streets for revenge, we must deal with the underlying social causes behind the act.

Anarchists should begin to have community forums on the cause and manifestations of crime in the Black community. We have to seriously examine the social institutions: family, schools, prisons, jobs, etc. that cause us to fuss, fight, rob and kill each other, rather than the enemy who is causing all our misery. While we should mobilise to restrain offenders, we must begin to realise that only the community will effectively deal with the mater. Not the racist Capitalist system, with its repressive police, courts and prisons. Only we have psychology and understanding to deal with it; now we must develop the will. No one else cares.

Instead of eye-for eye punishment, there should be restitution to the victims, their families or society. No revenge, such as the death penalty will bring a murder victim back, nor will long-term imprisonment serve either justice or the protection of society. After all, prisons are only human trashcans for those that society has discarded as worthless. No sane and just society would adopt such a course. Society makes criminals and must be responsible for their treatment. White capitalist society is itself a crime, and is the greatest teacher of corruption and violence.

In an Anarchist society, prisons would be done away with, along with courts and police (except for the exceptions I have alluded to), and be replaced with community-run programs and centres interested solely with human regeneration and social training, rather than custodial supervision in a inhuman lockup. The fact is that if a person is so violent or dangerous, he is probably mentally warped or has some physical defect anyway, which causes him to commit violent acts after social justice has been won. If such people are mentally defective, then they should be placed in a mental health facility, rather than a prison. Human rights should never be stripped and he should not be punished. Schools, hospitals, doctors and above all social equality, public welfare and liberty might prove the safest means to get rid of crimes and criminals together. If a special category such as "criminal" or "enemy" is created, then these persons may forever feel an outcast and never change. Even if he or she is a class enemy, they should retain all civil and human rights in society, even though they of course would be restrained if they led a counter-revolution; the difference is we want to defeat them ideologically, not militarily or by consigning them to a so-called re-education camp or to be shot like the Bolsheviks did when assuming power in Russia in 1917.

There are two major reasons why activists in the Black community - as we move to change society, its values and conditions - must immediately take a serious look and act to change the political debate around crime, prisons and the so-called criminal justice system. These two reasons hit right home:

One is because during any given year, one out of four Black men in this country is in prison, in jail on parole, or probation, compared to just one of every fifteen white men. In fact Blacks make up 50-85 percent of most prison populations around the U.S., making a truism of the radical phraseology that "Prisons are concentration camp for the Black and poor". It may be your brother, sister, husband, wife, daughter or son in prison, but I guarantee you we all know someone in prison at this very minute! The other primary reason Blacks have a vested interest in crime and penal institutions is because by far, most Blacks and other non- whites are in prison for committing offences against their own community.

Prisons are compact duplicates of the Black community, in that many of the same negative and destructive elements that are allowed to exist in our community and cause crime, especially drugs, are in poison in a more blatant and concentrated form To call such places "correctional"

or "rehabilitative" institutions is a gross misnomer. Death camps are more like it. These prisons do not exist to punish everyone equally, but to protect the existing Capitalist system from you and me, the poor and working class.

The high rate or recidivism proves, and the so-called authorities all agree, that the prison system is a total failure. About 70 percent of those entering prison are repeat offenders who commit increasingly serious crimes. The brutality or prison experience and the "ex-con" stigma when they are finally released make them worse. Basic to solving these crucial problems is organisation. The Black community and the Black Liberation movement must support the prisoners in their fight for prisoners human rights They should fight far the release of political prisoners and victims of racial injustice. They should also form coalitions of groups in the Black community to fight against the racist penal and judicial system, and especially the unequal application of the death penalty, which is just another form of genocide against the Black race. And finally, and maybe most importantly, local community groups must begin programs of re- education with brothers and sisters in prison because only through planned, regular, and constant contact can we begin to resolve this problem that so directly touches our lives.

Abolish prisons.

The Drug Epidemic: A New Form of Black Genocide?

One of the worst forms of criminality is drug dealing, and it deserves same separate comments all its own. There is a negative drug subculture in the Black community that glorifies, or at least makes acceptable, drug use, even though it is killing us and destroying our community. In fact, every day we read of some junkie in our communities dying over an overdose of drugs, or of some street corner drug dealer dying from a shootout over a dispute or tip-off during a drug deal "gone sour". The tragedy of the latter is that, these days, innocent victims - children or elderly people - have also been gunned down in the crossfire. The drug addict (the new term seems to be "crack-head") is another tragic figure; he was a human being just like anyone else, but because of his oppressed social environment, sought drugs to ease the pain or to escape temporarily from the "concrete jungles" we are forced live in the urban ghettos of America.

With the introduction of crack, a more powerful derivative of cocaine, which made its appearance in the 1980s, even more problems and tragedies of this sort had developed - more addicts, more street gang killings, and more deterioration of our community. In the major urban areas there have almost always been drug uses, what is new is the depth of geographical penetration of crack to Black communities in all areas of the country. But the spread of crack is just a follow-up to massive government drug peddling that began at the end of the decade of the 1960s. The white House is the "rock house", meaning the U.S. political administration is behind the whole drug trade. The U.S. government has actually been smuggling drugs into this country for many years aboard CIA and military planes to use as a chemical warfare weapon against Black America. These drugs were mostly heroin imported from the so-called "Golden Triangle" of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. But with the introduction of crack cocaine, there was no need to import drugs into the country at the same extent as before, because- it could be chemically prepared in a mainland lab, and then distributed immediately. Crack created a whole new generation of drug clients and customers for the drug dealers; it was cheap and highly addictive.

Crack and other drugs are a huge source of profits for the government, and it keeps the Black community passive and politically indifferent. That is the main reason why we cannot depend

upon the police force and or the government to stop the drug traffic or help the victims hooked on drugs. They are pushing the drugs to beat us down, on the one hand, but the State is also made more powerful because of the phoney "war on drugs" which allows police state measures in Black and oppressed communities, and because of millions of dollars in government monetary appropriations made of "law enforcement" agencies, who supposedly are putting down the traffic in drugs. But they never go after the bankers or the big business pharmaceutical companies who fund the drug trade, just the street level dealers, who are usually poor Blacks.

Unemployment is another reason that drug trafficking is so prevalent in our communities. Poor people will desperately look for anything to make money with, even the very drugs that are destroying out communities. But if people have no jobs or income, drugs look very lucrative and the best way out of the situation. In fact, the drug economy has become the only income in many poor Black communities, and the only thing that some people perceive will lift them out of lives of desperate poverty. Clearly, decent jobs at a union wage are part of the answer to ending drug trafficking in our community, rather than a dependence on police, courts and the State. The cops are not our friends or ally, and must be exposed for their part in protecting the trade, rather than suppressing it.

Only the community can stop drug trafficking, and it is our responsibility however you look at it. After all, those junkies are our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, neighbours and friends; they are no strangers. We must organise to save their lives and the life of our community. We must establish anti-dope programs in Black communities all over the country. We must expose and counter the government's role as pusher of dope, along with that of the police as protector of the drug trade. But also we must be prepared to help the drug victims with street counselling, street clinics (where they cab clean-up and learn a trade and the socio-political reasons for drug use), propaganda against drug use, and other activities.

Junkies are the victims of the drug society, which thinks it's cool to use drugs. Children are some of the biggest victims of drug dealing, when they are tricked or forced (by economic necessity) into using or selling it. The users and dealers both are victims, but the dealers are something else than entirely innocent. Even though that Black on the corner selling dope bags is a victim himself of the economic and political system which makes him do it, dope dealers are a corrupt, dangerous breed who must be stopped. Many people have been killed or seriously injured for naively trying to oppose dope dealers, and make them leave their neighbourhoods. Therefore, whereas the policy with junkies would be more benevolent and understanding, with dope dealers we must be cautious, and even ruthless when it is called for. We need to try to win them over first with an economic and political program to draw them away from the drug trade, but many of the dealers are so violence prone, especially the "big shots" (who are also protected by the cops) they must be opposed by both military and political means.

We are not advocating the summary murder of people, but we are saying if it takes death to bring about a change in the community, so be it! The issue of death is essentially an issue of who is doing the dying. It can be direct and exercised against the death merchant, or it can be indirect and exercised against our youth - if we let it. To be aware of a dangerous situation and not move to change it is to be as responsible for that dangerous situation as those who created it in the first place.

Listen, I don't want to simplify this problem by saying that just kill a few street-level dealers and that will end it. No it won't, AND WE DON'T WANT TO DO THAT ANYWAY! They are just poor people trying to survive this system, just pawns in the drug game whose lives don't matter

to the big Capitalists or government. When they say so these street level dealers will be killed or imprisoned, but the drug peddling system will go on. This is a socio-political problem, which can best be addressed by grassroots organisations. But it's the corporate and industrial backers of the drug trade (not just the comer dealer) that not only must not only be exposed, but must be moved on. In addition to educational, agitation and other action, there must be military action by revolutionary cells.

The underground actions which we are asking people to move an can be carried out by a relatively small group of dedicated people, a revolutionary cell of armed fighters, who have been trained in guerrilla tactics But even these small groups of people must have the support of the neighbourhoods in order to function, otherwise people will not know it from another violent gang. Once this social cohesiveness exists among the community, then we can begin to put this proposal into action against the most violent, high-level drug dealers. We are addressing ourselves to what can be more or less be considered to be guidelines for dealing with the problem on a neighbourhood or community-wide level then at a national level.

- Set up drug education classes in the community, for the youth especially, to expose the nature of the drug trade, who it hurts, and how the government, banks, and pharmaceutical companies are behind it all.
- Exposure of the death merchants and their police protectors (Photos, posters, fliers, newsletters, etc.)
- Harassment of the dealers; i.e., threatening phone calls, knocking the drug "product," have citizens marching inside their "place of business," and other tactics.
- Set up drug rehabilitation clinics so that junkies can be treated, can study the nature of their oppression, and can be wan over to revolutionary politics. We must win people away from drug use and to the revolution
- Physical elimination of the dealer; intimidation driving him out a neighbourhood or out of town, beatings, and assassination, where necessary.

DOPE IS DEATH! WE MUST FIGHT DOPE ADDICTION BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY! DO ALL YOU CAN TO HELP YOUR PEOPLE IN THE ANTI-DOPE WAR!

African Intercommunalism

The Anarchist ideals lead logically to internationalism or more precisely trans-nationalism, which means beyond the nation-state. Anarchists foresee a time when the nation-state will cease to have any positive value at all for most people, and will in fact be junked. But that time is not yet here, and until it is, we must organise for intercommunalism, or world relations between African people and their revolutionary social movements, instead of their governments and heads of state.

The Black Panther Party first put forward the concept of intercommunalism in the 1960s and, although slightly different, is very much a libertarian concept at its core. (This used to be called "Pan Africanism," but included mainly "revolutionary" governments and colonial or independence movements as allies). Because of the legacy of slavery and continuing economic

neo-colonialism, which has dispersed Blacks to every continent, it is feasible to speak of Black international revolutionary solidarity.

Here is how Anarchists see the world: the world is presently organised into competing nation-states, which though the Capitalist Western nations have been responsible for most of the world's famine, imperialism and exploitation of the non-white peoples of the earth. In fact, all states are instruments of oppression. Even though there are governments that claim to be "workers' states", "Socialist countries" or so-called "Revolutionary governments" in essence they all have the same function: dictatorship and oppression of the few over the many. The bankruptcy of the state is further proven when one looks at the millions of dead over two world wars, sparked by European Imperialism, (1914-198 and 1939- 1945), and hundreds of "brush wars" incited by the superpowers of the West or Russia in the 1950s and continuing to this day. This includes "workers' states" like China-Russia, Vietnam-China, Vietnam- Cambodia. Somalia-Ethiopia, Russia-Czechoslovakia and others who have gone to war over border disputes, political intrigue, invasion or other hostile action. As long as there are nation-states, there will be war, tension and national enmity.

In fact, the sad part about the decolonisation of Africa in the 1960s was that the countries were organised into the Eurocentric ideal of the nation-state, instead of some sort of other formation more applicable to the continent, such as a continental federation. This, of course, was a reflection of the fact that although the Africans were obtaining "flag independence" and all the trappings of the sovereign European state, they in fed were not obtaining freedom. The Europeans still controlled the economies of the African continent, and the nationalist leaders who came to the fore were for the mast part the most pliable and conservative possible. Tire countries of Africa were like a dog with a leash around its neck; although the Europeans could not longer rules the continent directly thorough colonial rule, it now did so through puppets it controlled and defended, like Mobutu in the Congo, Selassie in Ethiopia, and Kenyatta in Kenya. Many of these men were dictators of the worst sort and their regimes existed strictly because of European finance capital In addition, there were white settler communities in the

Portuguese colonies, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, who oppressed the African peoples even worse than the old colonial system. This is why the national liberation movements made their appearances in the 1960s and 70s.

Anarchists support national liberation movements to the degree that they struggle against a colonial or imperialist power; but also note that in almost every instance where such liberation fronts have assumed state power, they have become "State Communist" parties and new dictators over the masses of the people. These include same who had engaged in the mast epic struggles, but also include many based on the most obvious military dictatorship from the start. They are not progressive and they tolerate no dissent. For instance, no sooner had the MPLA government been in power m Angola, than it began to arrest all its left-wing ideological opponents (Maoists, Trotskyites, Anarchists, and others) and to forcibly to quell strikes by workers for higher pay and better working conditions, calling such job actions "blackmail" and "economic sabotage." And with the Nito Alves affair and his alleged coup attempt (Alves was a hero of the revolution and a popular military leader), there was the first party purge of opponents in the new government. Something similar to this also took place when the Sandini- sta National Liberation movement took over in Nicaragua in the 1980s. None of this should seem strange or uncharacteristic to Anarchists, when we consider that the Bolshevik party did the same thing when it consolidated state power during the Russian Revolution (1917-1921).

Countries such as Benin, Ethiopia, the People's Republic of the Congo and other "revolutionary" governments in Africa, are not in power as the result of a popular social revolution, but rather because of a military coup or being installed by one of the major world powers. Further: many of the national liberation movements were not independent social movements, but were rather under the influence or control of Russia or China as part of their geopolitical struggle against Western imperialism and each other. This is not to say that revolutionary movements should not accept weapons and other material support from an outside power, as long as they remain independent politically and determine their own policies, without such aid being conditional on the political dictates and the "party line" of another country.

But even though we may differ with them politically and tactically in many areas, and even with all their flaws after assuming State power, the revolutionary liberation fighters are our comrades and allies in common struggle against the common enemy - the U.S. imperialist ruling class, while the fight goes on. Their struggle releases the death grip of U.S. and Western imperialism (or as Anarchists more precisely call it Capitalist world power), and while the fight goes on we are bound together in comradeship and solidarity. Yet we still cannot overlook atrocities committed by movements like the Khmer Rouge, a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement in Cambodia, which just massacred millions of people to carry out rigid Stalinist political policies and to consolidate the country. We must lay this butchery and other crimes committed by State Communism bare for all to see. We do not favour this kind of revolution, which is just sheer power seeking and terrorism against the people. This is why Anarchism has always disagreed with how the Bolsheviks seized power in Soviet Russia; and Stalin's butchery of the Russian people seems to have set a model for the State Communist movements to follow over the years.

The national liberation fronts make one basic mistake of many nationalist movements of oppressed peoples, and that is to organise in a fashion that class distinctions are obliterated This happened in America, where in the fight for democratic rights, the civil rights movement included Black middle class preachers, teachers and others, and every Black persons was a "brother" or" sister," as long as

they were Black. But this simplistic analysis and social reality did not hold for long, because when the Civil rights phase of the American Black struggle had spent itself, class distinctions and class struggle came to the fore. They have been getting sharper ever since. Although there are Black mayors and other bureaucrats, they merely serve as pacification agents of the State: "Black faces in high places". This neocolonial system is similar to the type of neocolonialism which took pace in the 3rdWorld, after many countries had obtained their "independence" in the 1960s. Europe still maintained control through puppet politicians and a command of petty bourgeois class, who were willing to barter the freedom of the people for personal gains. These people merely preside over the misery of the masses. They are not a serious concession to our struggle. They are put in office to co-opt the struggle and deaden the people to their pain.

So while Black revolutionaries generally favour the ideas of African intercommunalism, they want principled revolutionary unity. Of course, the greatest service we can render the peoples of the so-called "Third World" of Africa, Asia and Latin America, is to make a revolution here in North America - in the belly of the beast. For in freeing ourselves, we get the U.S. imperialist ruling class off both out backs. We wish to build an international Black organisation against Capitalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and military dictatorship, which could more effectively fight the Capitalist powers and create a world federation of Black peoples. We want to unite a brother or sister in North America with the Black peoples of Australia and Oceania, Africa, the

Caribbean and South America, Asia, the Middle East, and those millions of our people Living in Britain and other Western European countries. We want to unite tribes, nations and Black cultures into an international body of grassroots and struggling forces.

All over the world, Black people are being oppressed by their national governments. Some are colonial subjects in European countries, and one or another of the African States exploits some. Only a Social revolution will lead to Black unity and freedom. However this will only be possible when there exists an international Black revolutionary organisation and social movement. An organisation which can coordinate the resistance struggles everywhere of African peoples; actually a network of such organisations, resistance movements, which are spread all over the world based on a consensus for revolutionary struggle. This concept accepts any level of violence that will be necessary to enforce the demands of the people and workers. In those countries where an open Black revolutionary movement would be subjected to fierce repression by the state, such as in South Africa and in same Black puppet dictatorships in other parts of Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia, it would be necessary to wage an underground resistance struggle. Further, the state has grown more and more violent, with widespread torture and executions, prisons and maximum police controls, spying and deprivation of democratic rights, police brutality and murder. Clearly such governments-and all governments-must be overthrown. They will not fall due to internal economic or political problems, but must be defeated and dismantled. So we call for an international resistance movement to overthrow governments and the system of Capitalist world government

But even in the Western imperialist countries, we must recognise the legitimacy of revolutionary violence. When such forms of revolutionary action are required, however, a clear difference should be seen among revolutionaries between simple terrorism without popular support and coherent political program and guerrilla warfare arising out of the collectively felt frustrations of the common people and workers. The use of military methods would be necessary in a case where the violence of the state made it imperative for Black revolutionaries to defend themselves by taking the armed offensive against the state and the ruling class, and to expropriate the wealth of the Capitalist class during the Social revolution.

The Black liberation movement needs an organisation capable of international coordination of the Black liberation struggle, a world federation of African peoples. Although this would not just be an Anarchist movement: a federation like this would be more effective than any group of states, whether the United Nations or the Organisation of African Unity, in freeing the Black masses. It would involve the masses of people themselves, not just national leaders or nation states. The military dictators and government bureaucrats have only proven that they know how to spend money on pomp and circumstance, but not how to dismantle the last vestiges of colonialism in South Africa or defeat Western neocolonialist intrigues. Africa is still the poorest of the World's continents, while materially the richest. The contrast is clear: millions of people are starving in much of Equatorial Africa, but the tribal chiefs, politicians and military dictators, are driving around in Mercedes and living in luxury villas, while they do the bidding of West European and American bankers through the International Monetary Fund. They are part of the problem, not part of the solution!

Our ideas about the importance of intercommunalism am based an a firm belief that only a federation of free peoples will bring true Black power to the masses. "Power to the people" does not mean a government or political party to rule in their name, but social and political power in the hands of the people themselves. The only real "people's power" is the power to make

their decisions on matters of importance, and to merely elect someone else to do so, or to have a dictatorship forced down their throats. True freedom is to have full self-determination about one's social economic and cultural development. The future is Anarchist Communism, not the nation-state, bloody dictators, Capitalism or wage slavery.

Armed Defence of the Black Commune

"Our insistence on military action, defensive and retaliatory, has nothing to do with romanticism or precipitous idealist fervour. We want to be effective. We want to live. Our history teaches us that the successful liberation struggles require an armed people, a whole people, actively participating in the struggle for their liberty!"

George Jackson, quoted in Blood in my Eye

We must organise self-defence units to protect the Black community and its organisations. It is the police and the government who are the main perpetrators of violence against Black people. Every day we read of the police murdering and maiming the people in our community, all in the name of "law and order." This police brutality has included the use of deadly force against children as young as five and elderly persons over 75 years old! We must disarm and demilitarise the police, and force them to leave our community. Perhaps this can be done after a rebellion or insurrection drives them out, or perhaps they will have to be driven out by a street guerrilla force, like the Black Liberation Army tried to do in the 1970s. I have no way of knowing. I just know that they have to go. They are an oppressive occupying army, are not of our community, cannot understand its problems, and do not identify with its people and their needs. Further, it is the corruption of the cops that protects organised crime and vice in our community, and Capitalism with its exploitative economic conditions which is responsible for all crime.

Existing police forces should be replaced with the Black community's own self-defence force, made up of members of our community elected or appointed by their neighbours to that position, or from an existing street guerrilla force or political organisation if the people agree. They would be subject to immediate recall and dismissal by the Community Control boards of an area. This is only so that we will have community control of the self-defence force, begin to deal with fratricidal Black-on-Black crime, and be able to defend ourselves from white racist or police attacks. With the increase of white racist violence today, and the possibility of white mob action in the future, usually in the name of "law and order," this community self-defence force is most important. The only question is: can we do this now?

We exist now under conditions of nominal legality and civil rights, but at some stage in the process of building up our farces, his inevitable that the white power structure will recognise the danger to itself represented by such a free Black commune, and will then try to forcibly repress it. We must have the self-defence capability to resist. This concept of organising a self- defence force accepts any level of violence that will be necessary to enforce the demands of the people and workers. Yet these self- defence forces would not a 'party vanguard," a police force, or even a standing army in the Statist or usually thought of sense; they would be a Black Peoples' militia, self-managed by the workers and community itself: in other words, the people-in-arms. These militia organisations will allow us to engage in offensive or defensive actions, either in general community defence, or as part of an insurrection or underground resistance.

But what do we do right now in conditions of legality, to reclaim our community from violent racist cops? Do we sit around and debate the appropriateness of military preparation, when the

enemy is our community now, committing rape and murder of Black people or do we hit back? How do we even get the idea across to our people and start to train them for paramilitary operations? On a mass scale, I advocate the immediate formation of defence and survival skills study groups, under the guise of gun clubs, martial arts societies, wilderness survival clubs or whatever we need to call them. A thorough understanding of marksmanship, ammunition fabrication, demolition and weapon manufacturing is minimal for everyone. In addition, we should study first aid pertaining to the rather traumatic injuries sustained from gunfire and explosives, combat communications, combat weapons, combat tactics for the small group, combat strategy for the region or nation, combat intelligence of police and military activities among other subjects. These subjects are indispensable if am live underground or during a general insurrection.

We should put emphasis on the purchase, collection, duplication and dissemination of military manuals, gunsmithing textbooks, explosive and improvised demolitions manuals, police and government technical manuals, and pirated editions of right-wing manuals on the subject (since they seem to write the best material in this area), and also begin the study of how to build intelligence networks to collect information on the rapidly growing Skinhead and other totalitarian racist organisations, along with intelligence and counter-intelligence information on the government secret police and law enforcement agencies, like the FBI, CIA, ATF, etc., and on any and every other subject which could be of use to us in the coming struggle.

Even though in the United States, development of military skills and self defence is simpler than many other countries because arms and ammunition are widely available, it is logical to assume that the arms situation will soon be so tight so as to make firearms virtually unobtainable, except through an expensive Black market because of the government's "war an drugs" and other proposed gun control legislation to prevent street violence," or so they say (Do you think the sporting goods stores will be open during an insurrection?) Therefore we should learn to use machine tool technology to produce our own weapons. Perfectly adequate firearms may be produced using a minimum of machine teals, providing the individual or group is willing to do the necessary studying and preparation. It is not enough to know a little about these subjects; it is a matter of future survival - of life and death that one be highly proficient.

I am not advocating the immediate waging of urban guerrilla warfare, especially where there is no mass base for such activities. What I am advocating at this stage is armed self-defence and the knowledge of tactics to resist military aggression against the Black community. It is a foolish and unfortunate trait among Anarchists, the white left and sections of the Black movement to condemn the study of military skills as premature or adventurist, or an the other hand to cast oneself into a blind fury of bank expropriations, kidnappings, bombings or plane hijackings. Too many people in the movement have a death trip approach to guns - they assume if you are not "fooling around," then you should prove your convictions via a suicidal shootout in the streets. It doesn't have to be that way.

But the Black movement doesn't even have the luxury of such tepid debates, and must have an armed defence policy because America has a long tradition of government political repression and vigilante paramilitary violence. Although such attacks have been directed primarily at Blacks and other oppressed nationalities in the past, they have also been directed at labour unions and dissident political groups. Such violence makes it absolutely necessary to acquire familiarity with firearms and military tactics. In fact, the Black Resistance movement that I spoke of earlier should think of itself as a paramilitary movement, rather than a strict political association.

We must assert our rights to armed self-defence and revolution, even though it is true that there is a lot of loose talk about guns, self defence, revolution, "urban guerrilla warfare", etc. in the Black and radical movements, but with very little study and practice in handling and using weapons. Some of the same folks think "picking up the gun" means that you pick one up for the first time on the day of an insurrection or confrontation with police. This is nonsense and is the real "revolutionary suicide", you could get killed not knowing what you are doing. But many instances attest to the fact that armed community self defence can be carried out successfully, such as the MOVE resistance in Philadelphia, the Republic of New Africa armed resistance in Detroit and Mississippi and the Black Panther cases. Even as important as the act of defence itself is, is the fact that these instances of successful self -defence have made a tremendous impact on the Black community, encouraging other acts of resistance.

Insurrection

But what is a rebellion and how does it differ from an insurrection? An insurrection is a general uprising against the power structure. It is usually a sustained rebellion over the course of days, weeks, months or even years. It is a type of class war that involves a whole population in an act of armed or semi-armed resistance. Sometimes mistakenly called a rebellion, its character is far more combative and revolutionary. Rebellions are almost totally spontaneous, short-term affairs. An insurrection is also not the revolution, SINCE REVOLUTION IS A SOCIAL PROCESS, RATHER THAN A SINGLE EVENT, but it can be an important part of the revolution, maybe its final phase. An insurrection is a planned violent protest campaign which takes the spontaneous revolt of the masses to a higher level. Revolutionaries intervene to push rebellions to insurrectionary stage, and the insurrection to a social revolution. It is not small, isolated pockets of urban guerrillas taking actions, unless those guerrillas are part of a larger revolt.

The importance of recognising the true differences of each level can define our strategy and tactics at that stage, and not lead us prematurely into a full offensive when the enemy is not yet weakened enough by mass action or political attacks. The importance of also recognising the true causes of the revolt cannot be understated. Anarchist revolutionaries intervene in such struggles to show people how to resist and the possibilities of winning freedom. We want to take the people's rebellions against the state and use them to weaken the rule of Capital. We want to create resistance on a longer term and to win liberated zones To disconnect these communities from the state means that these rebellions will assume a conscious political character like the Palestinian Intifada in the occupied territories controlled by Israel in the Middle East. Creating the possibility of a Black insurrection means popularising and spreading the various rebellions to other cities, towns and even countries, and increasing them in number and frequency. It also means consciously nullifying the power of the state, instead of temporary revolts against it which ultimately preserve its power. There must be a deliberate attempt to push the government out of existence, and establish People's Power. This has not yet happened with the various Black revolts we have seen since 1964, when the first such modern revolt erupted in Harlem, NY.

In the 1960s, the Black communities all over the U.S. rose up angrily with massive rebellions against the state demanding racial justice. After the Harlem revolt, for the next four years major rebellions shook the U.S. in the Watts section of Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, and hundreds of other North American cities. Isolated acts of police brutality, racial discrimination substandard housing, economic exploitation, "the hoodlum element", a breakdown in "family values", and a

host of other "explanations" have been put forward by liberal and conservative sociologist and others commissioned by the state to whitewash the true causes. Yet none of these revealed this as a protest against the Capitalist system and colonial rule, even though the social scientists "warned" of the possibility of a new outbreak of violence.

Once again in the spring, 1992, we saw a massive revolt in Los Angeles, whose immediate causes were related to the outrageous acquittal of Los Angeles policemen who had brutally beaten Rodney King.

But there again this was just an immediate cause acting as a trigger; this revolt was not a sympathy revolt on behalf of Rodney King personally. The cause of this rebellion was widespread social inequality in the Capitalist system and police terrorism. This time the rebellion spread to 40 cities and four foreign countries. And it was not just a so-called "race riot", but rather a class revolt that included a large number of Latinos, whites and even Asians. But it was undeniably a revolt for racial injustice first and foremost, even if it was not just directed against white people in general but the Capitalist system and the rich. It was not limited to just even the inner city in the Las Angeles area but spread even to white upper crust areas in Hollywood, Ventura, and beyond. This was the beginning stage of class warfare.

If an underground military force existed or a militia was assembled, it could have entered the filed of battle with more weaponry and advanced tactics. As it was the gangs played that role, and played it very well. Their participation is why it took so long to put the rebellion down, but even they could not prevent the reestablishment of white power in South Central Los Angeles. Not just because of being militarily out gunned, but because they had no revolutionary political program despite all their rhetoric of having been radicalised. Also the state came down extremely hard on the rebels. Over 20,000 persons were jailed, 50 were killed and hundreds wounded.

Could a liberated zone have been won, so that dual power could have been established? That possibility existed and still does exist if the people are properly armed and educated mass resistance with heavy military weaponry may have won serious concessions, one of which is to pull back the cops. We don't know that, this is purely speculation. We do know that this is not the last rebellion in L.A. and other cities. They may come much quicker now that the genie of urban revolution is out of the bottle again. We can only hope and prepare. ONWARD TO THE BLACK REVOLUTION

Anarchist Theory and Practice

The major aim of this chapter is to list the major elements of Anarchist thought and to give examples of what some Anarchists think about them. Unlike other streams of political thought, Anarchists do not elevate certain texts or individuals above others. There are different types of Anarchists with many points of disagreement. The primary areas of debate among Anarchists relate to what form of organisation should be struggled for and what tactics we should use. For instance, some of their most significant differences concern the economic organisation of future society. Some Anarchists reject money, and substitute a system of trade in which work is exchanged for goods and services. Others reject all forms of trade or barter or private ownership as Capitalism, and feel that all major property should be owned in common.

There are Anarchists who believe in guerrilla warfare - including assassination, bombings, bank expropriations, etc. - as one means of revolutionary attacks on the State. But there also are Anarchists who believe almost exclusively in organisational, labour or community work. There

is no single type, nor do they all agree on strategy and tactics. Some are opposed to violence; some accept it only in self- defence or during a revolutionary insurrection.

Anarchists and Anarchism have historically been misrepresented to the world. The popular impression of an Anarchist as an uncontrollably emotional, violent person who is only interested in destruction for its own sake, and who is opposed to all forms of organisation, still persists to this day. Further, the mistaken belief that Anarchy is chaos and confusion, a reign of rape, murder and mindless, total disorder and insanity is widely believed by the general public.

This false impression primarily is still widely believed because people from across the political spectrum have consciously been promoting this lie for years. All who strive to oppress and exploit the working class, and gain power far themselves, whether they come from the right or the left, will always be threatened by Anarchism. This is because Anarchists hold that all authority and coercion must be struggled against. In fact, Anarchists want to get rid of the greatest perpetrator of violence throughout history: governments. To Anarchists, a Capitalist "democratic" government is no better than a fascist or Communist regime, because the ruling class only differs in the amount of violence they authorise their police and army to use and the degree of rights they will allow, if any. Through war, police repression, social neglect, and political repression, governments have killed millions of persons, whether trying to defend themselves or overthrow another government. Anarchists want to end this slaughter, and build a society based on peace and freedom.

What is Anarchism? Anarchism is free or Libertarian Socialism. Anarchists are opposed to government, the state and Capitalism. Therefore, simply speaking, Anarchism is a non-governmental form of Socialism.

In common with all Socialists, the Anarchists hold that the private ownership of land, capital and machinery has had its time; that it is condemned to disappear, and that all requisites for production must and will, become the common property of society, and be managed in common by the producers of wealth. Peter Kropotkin, in his Anarchist-Communism: Its Basis and Principles.

Though there are several different "schools" of Anarchist though, revolutionary Anarchist or Anarchist- Communism is based upon the class struggle, but it does not take a mechanist view of the class struggle taken by the Marxist-Leninists. For instance, it does not take the view that only the industrial proletariat can achieve Socialism, and that the victory of this class, led by a "communist working class party" represents the final victory over Capitalism. Nor do we accept the idea of a "workers' state". Anarchists believe that only the peasants, workers and farmers can liberate themselves and that they should manage industrial and economic production through workers' councils, factory committees, and farm cooperatives, rather than with the interference of a party or government.

Anarchists are social revolutionaries, and feel that the Social revolution is the process through which a free society will be created. Self-management will be established in all areas of social life, including the right of all oppressed races of people to self-determination. As I have stated, self-determination is the right to self-government. By their own initiative, individuals will implement their own management of social life through voluntary associations. They will refuse to surrender their self-direction to the State, political parties or vanguard sects since each of these merely aid in establishing or reestablishing domination. Anarchists believe the state and capitalist authority will be abolished by the means of direct action: wildcat strikes, slowdowns, boycotts, sabotage, and armed insurrection. We recognise our goals cannot be separated from the means used to achieve them. Hence our practice and the associations we create will reflect the society we seek.

Crucial attention will necessarily be paid to the area of economic organisation, since it is here that the interests of everyone converge. Under Capitalism we all have to sell our labour to survive and to feed our families and ourselves. But after an Anarchist social revolution, the wage system and the institution of private and state property will be abolished and replaced with the production and distribution of goods according to the communist principle of: "From each according to ability, to each according to need." Voluntary associations of producers and consumers will take common possession of the means of production and allow the free use of all resources to any voluntary group, provided that such use does not deprive others or does not entail the use of wage labour. These associations could be food and housing cooperatives, cooperative factories, community-run schools, hospitals, recreation facilities, and other important social services. These associations will federate with each other to facilitate their common goals on both a territorial and functional basis.

This federalism as a concept is a form of social organisation in which self-determining groups freely agree to coordinate their activities. The only social system that can possibly meet the diverse needs of society, while still promoting solidarity on the widest scale, is one that allows people to freely associate on the basis of common needs and interests. Federalism emphasises autonomy and decentralisation, fosters solidarity and complements groups' efforts to be as self-sufficient as possible. Groups can then be expected to cooperate as long as they derive mutual benefit. Contrary to the Capitalist legal system and its contracts, if such benefits are not felt to be mutual in an Anarchist society, any group will have the freedom to dissociate. In this manner a flexible and self-regulating social organism will be created, always ready to meet new needs by new organisations and adjustments. Federalism is not a type of Anarchism, but it is an essential part of Anarchism. It is the joining of groups and peoples for political and economic survival and livelihood.

Anarchists have an enormous job ahead of them, and they must be able to work together for the benefit of the idea The Italian Anarchist Errico Malatesta said it best when he wrote:

"Our task is that of pushing the "people " to demand and to seize all the freedom they can to make themselves responsible for their own needs without waiting for orders from any kind of authority. Out task is that of demonstrating the uselessness and harmfulness of the government, or provoking and encouraging by propaganda and action all kinds of individual and collective initiatives… After the revolution, Anarchists will have a special mission of being the vigilant custodians of freedom, against the aspirants to power and possible tyranny of the majority… "

Quoted in Malatesta: his Life and Times, edited by Vernon Richards

So, this is the job of the federation, but it does not end with the success of the revolution. There is much reconstruction work to be done, and the revolution must be defended to fulfil our tasks, Anarchists must have their own organisations. They must organise the post-revolutionary society, and this is why Anarchists federate themselves.

In a modern independent society, the process of federation must be extended to all humanity. The network of voluntary associations - the Commune - will know no borders. It could be the size of the city, state, or nation or a society much larger than the nation-state under Capitalism. It could be a mass commune that would encompass all the world's peoples in a number of continental Anarchist federations, say North America, Africa, or the Caribbean. Truly this would be a new world! Not a United Nations or "One World government" but a united humanity.

But our opposition is formidable - each of us has been taught to believe in the need for government, in the absolute necessity of experts, in taking orders, in authority - for some of us it is all

new. But when we believe in ourselves and decide we can make a society based on free, caring individuals that tendency within us will become the conscious choice of freedom-loving people. Anarchists see their job as strengthening that tendency, and show that there is no democracy or freedom under government -whether in the United States, China or Russia. Anarchists believe in direct democracy by the people as the only kind of freedom and self-rule.

Types of Anarchists

But Anarchists can't be expected to agree on everything. Historically these differences have led to distinct tendencies in Anarchist theory and practice.

Individualist Anarchists hope for a future society in which free individuals do their duty and share resources "according to the dictates of abstract justice". Generally speaking, Individualists are mere philosophers rather than revolutionary activists. They are civil libertarians who want to reform the system to make it work "fairly". They were prevalent in the 19th century, but are still seen in "counter- cultural" Anarchist formations, middle class philosophers, or right-wing Libertarians.

Mutualists are Anarchists associated with the ideas of 19th century Anarchist philosopher, Pierre- Joseph Proudhon, who based his future economy on "a pattern of individuals and small groups possessing (but not owning) their means of production, and bound by contracts of mutual exchange and mutual credit (instead of money) which would insure to each individual the product of his own labour." This type of Anarchism appears when Individualists being to put their ideas into practice, and merely wish to reform Capitalism and make it "cooperative". This is also where the right wing Libertarians and advocates of a minimised role for the state get the ideas. Marx attacked Proudhon as an "idealist" and "utopian philosopher" for the Anarchist concept of Mutual Aid.

Collectivists are Anarchists based directly on the ideas of Michael Bakunin, the Russian Anarchist, the best-known advocate to the general public of Anarchist theory. Bakunin's collectivist form of Anarchism replaced Proudhon's insistence on individual possession with the idea of Socialist possession by voluntary institutions, and the right to the enjoyment of the individual product of his/her labour or its equivalent still assured to the individual worker. This type of Anarchism involves a direct threat to the class system and the Capitalist state, and is the view that society can only be reconstructed when the working class seizes control of the economy by a social revolution, destroys the State apparatus, and reorganises production on the basis of common ownership and control by associations of working people. This form of Anarchism is ideologically the basis of Anarchist-Syndicalism, or revolutionary labour unionism.

Anarcho-Syndicalists are Anarchists who are active in the labour and working class movements. Anarchist-Syndicalism is a form of Anarchism for class-conscious workers and peasants, for militants and activists in the labour movement, for libertarian Socialists who want equality as well as liberty. As pointed out, this philosophy is based heavily an the ideas of Bakunin, though its organising techniques stem from the French and Spanish CNT trade union movements (called "Syndicates"), where Anarchists were heavily involved. This is the type of Anarchism that influenced the IWW in North America and which expresses the view that the Capitalist state must be toppled by a revolutionary form of economic warfare called the General Strike, and that the economy must be reorganised and based on industrial unions, which would be under the counsel of the working class. All political matters would be handled by either an Industrial Union Congress,

while workplace matters would go to a factory committee, elected by the workers themselves and under their direct control. This type of Anarchism has great potential far organising an Anarchist working class movement in North America, if it raises contemporary issues like the shortened workweek, factory councils, the current depression and a fight back against the bosses' offensive of the last 20 years against the working class world wide.

Anarchist-Communists are revolutionary Anarchists who believe in the philosophy of class struggle, an end to Capitalism, and all forms of oppression. Contrary to Anarchist-Syndicalism it does not limit itself to workplace organising . The philosophy is based on the theories of Peter Kropotkin, another Russian Anarchist. Kropotkin and his fellow Anarchist-Communists not only envisaged the commune and workers' councils as the, proper guardians of production; they also attacked the wage system in all its forms, and revived the ideas of Libertarian communism. This type of Anarchism is also known as Libertarian Socialism, and includes most Socialists who are also opposed to the State, dictatorship, and party rule, though they are not Anarchists.

Since the 1870s the principles of Anarchist-Communism have been accepted by most Anarchist organisations favouring revolution. This Anarchist or Libertarian Communism must, of course, not be confused with much better known communism of the Marxist-Leninists, the communism which is based on state ownership of the economy and control of the both production and distribution, and also on party dictatorship. That form of authoritarian communist society is based on oppression and slavery to the state, while we favour a free, voluntary communism of shared resources. Libertarian Communism is not Bolshevism and has no connection with or support for Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky or Mao Tse Tung. It is not state or private control over the essentials of life we seek, and we oppose all forms of dictatorship. Anarchist communists seek to foster the growth of a new society in which freedom to develop as one see t is integrated to the fullest extent with social responsibility to others.

Autonomists are a new tendency in the Anarchist movement. This tendency arose in the mid-1980s in Germany and later spread to other countries in Europe and North America. Students, intellectuals, and disaffected workers made up this tendency originally, but there are also Anarchists who call themselves Autonomists to imply they are not linked with a federation, or are not doctrinaire or a purist. Like Libertarian Socialism, they seem to draw their ideology from both Marxism and some tenets of Anarchist philosophy like Anarchist Communism, but they tend to be more independent and very meticulous about explaining their different identity.

In conclusion, this is one way to list the different tendencies in Anarchist thought and practice. There may be many other ways to do it and describe the historical development of each tendency. That may be beyond the scope of this pamphlet. But most Anarchists would agree on these general statements: Anarchists hope for, construct theories about, and act to promote the abolition of government, the State, and the principle of authority that is central to contemporary social forms, and to replace them with a social organisation based on voluntary cooperation between free individuals. All Anarchist tendencies - except the Individualists and to some extent, the Mutualists - see this future society based an organic network of mutual aid associations, workers' and consumers collectives, communes, and other voluntary alliances, organised into regional units and other non-authoritarian federations far the purpose of sharing ideas, information technical skills and large scale technological, cultural and recreational resources. All Anarchists believe in freedom from hunger and want and are against all forms of class, sexual and racial oppression, as well as all political manipulation by the State.

The philosophy is an evolving ideal in which many individuals and social movements have influence. Feminism, Black Liberation, Gay rights, the ecology movement and others, are all additions to the awareness of the philosophy of Anarchism, and this influence has helped in the advancement of the ideal of Anarchism as a social force in modern society. These influences ensure that the Social revolution we all anticipate will be as all encompassing and democratic as possible, and that all will be fully liberated, not just affluent straight, white males.

Anarchist Versus Marxist-Leninist Thought on the Organisation of Society

Historically, there have been three major forms of socialism: Libertarian Socialism (Anarchism), Authoritarian Socialism (Marxist Communism), and Democratic Socialism (electoral social democracy). The non-Anarchist left has echoed the bourgeoisie's portrayal of Anarchism as an ideology of chaos and lunacy. But Anarchism and especially Anarchist-Communism has nothing in common with this image. It is false and made up by its ideological opponents, the Marxist-Leninists.

It is very difficult for the Marxist-Leninists to make an objective criticism of Anarchism as such, because by its nature it undermines all the suppositions basic to Marxism. If Marxism and Leninism, its variant which emerged during the Russian revolution, is held out to be the working class philosophy and the proletariat cannot owe its emancipation to anyone but itself, it is hard to go back on it and

say that the working class is not yet ready to dispense with authority over it. Lenin came up with the idea of a transitional State, which would "wither away" over time, to go along with Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat." The Anarchists expose this line as counter- revolutionary and sheer power grabbing. Over 75 years of Marxist-Leninist practice has proven us right. These so-called "Socialist States" produced by Marxist-Leninist doctrine have only produced Stalinist police states where workers have no rights, a new ruling class of technocrats and party politicians have emerged, and the class differential between those the state favoured over those it didn't created widespread deprivation among the masses and another class struggle. But instead of meeting such criticisms head an, they have concentrated their attacks not on the doctrine of Anarchism, but on particular Anarchist historical figures, especially Bakunin, an ideological opponent of Marx in the First International of Socialist movements in the last century.

Anarchists are social revolutionaries, who seek a stateless, classless, voluntary, cooperative federation of decentralised communes-based upon social ownership, individual liberty and autonomous selfmanagement of social and economic life.

The Anarchists differ with the Marxists-Leninists in many areas, but especially in organisation building. They differ from the authoritarian socialists in primarily three ways: they reject the Marxist-Leninist notions of the "vanguard party", "democratic centralism", and the "dictatorship of the proletariat", and Anarchists have alternatives to each of them. The problem is that almost the entire left, including some Anarchists, is completely unaware of Anarchism's tangible structural alternatives of the Catalyst Group, Anarchist Consensus, and the Mass Commune.

The Anarchist alternative to the vanguard party is the catalyst group. The catalyst group is merely an Anarchist-Communist federation of affinity groups in action. This Catalyst group or revolutionary anarchist federation would meet on a regular basis or only when there was a necessity, depending on the wishes of the membership and the urgency of social conditions. It would be made up of representatives from or the affinity group itself, with full voting rights, privileges,

and responsibilities. It would set both policies and future actions to be performed. It will produce both Anarchist-Communist theory and social practice. It believes in the class struggle and the necessity to overthrow Capitalist rule. It organises in the communities and workplaces. It is democratic and has no authority figures like a party boss or central committee.

In order to make a revolution large-scale, coordinated movements are necessary, and their formation is in no way counter to Anarchism. What Anarchists are opposed to is hierarchical, power-tripping leadership which suppresses the creative urge of the bulk of those involved, and forces an agenda down their throats. Members of such groups are mere servants and worshippers of the party leadership. But although Anarchists reject this type of domineering leadership, they do recognise that some people are more experienced, articulate, or skilled than others, and these people will play leadership action roles. These persons are not authority figures, and can be removed at the will of the body. There is also a conscious attempt to routinely rotate this responsibility and to pass on these skills to each other, especially to women and people of colour, who would ordinarily not get the chance. The experiences of these persons, who are usually veteran activists or better qualified than most at the moment can help form and drive forward movements, and even help crystallise the potential for revolutionary change in the popular movement. What they cannot do is take over the initiative of the movement itself. The members of these groups reject hierarchical positions - anybody having more "official" authority than others - and unlike the M-L vanguard parties, the Anarchist groups won't be allowed to perpetuate their leadership through a dictatorship after the revolution. Instead, the catalyst group itself will be dissolved and its members, when they are ready, will be absorbed into the new society's collective decision-making process. Therefore these Anarchists are not leaders, but merely advisors and organisers for a mass movement.

What we don't want or need is a group of authoritarians leading the working class, and then establishing themselves as a centralised decision-making command, instead of "withering away"; Marxist - Leninist states have perpetuated authoritarian institutions (the secret police, labour bosses, and the communist party) to maintain their power. The apparent effectiveness of such organisations ("we're just as efficient as the Capitalists") masks the way that "revolutionaries" who pattern themselves after Capitalist institutions become absorbed by bourgeois values, and completely isolated from the real needs and desires of ordinary people.

The reluctance of Marxist-Leninists to accept to accept revolutionary social change is, however, above all seen in Lenin's conception of the party. It is a prescription to just nakedly seize power and put it in the hands of the Communist Party. The party that Leninists create today, they believe, should become the (only) "Party of the Proletariat" in which that class could organise and seize power. In practice, however, this meant personal and party dictatorship, which they felt gave them the right and duty to wipe out all other parties and political ideologies. Both Lenin and Stalin killed millions or workers and peasants, their left-wing ideological opponents, and even members of the Bolshevik party. This bloody and treacherous history is why them is so much rivalry and hostility between Marxist-Leninist and Trot- skyite parties today, and it is why the "workers' states", whether in Cuba, China, Vietnam, or Korea are such oppressive bureaucracies over their people. It is also why most of the East European Stalinist countries had their government overthrown by the petty bourgeois and ordinary citizens in the 1980s. Maybe we are witnessing the eclipse of State communism entirely, since they have nothing new to say and will never get those governments back again.

While Anarchist groups reach decisions through Anarchist consensus, the Marxist-Leninists organise through so-called democratic centralism. Democratic centralism poses as a form of inner party democracy, but is really just a hierarchy by which each member of a party - ultimately of a society - is subordinate to a "higher" member until one reaches the all-powerful party central committee and its Chairman. This is a totally undemocratic procedure, which puts the leadership above criticism, even if it isn't above reproach. It is a bankrupt, corrupt method of internal operations for a political organisation. You have no voice in such a party, and must be afraid to say any unflattering comments to or about the leaders.

In Anarchist groups, proposals are talked out by members (none of whom has authority over another), dissenting minorities are respected, and each individual's participation is voluntary. Everyone has the right to agree or disagree over policy and actions, and everyone's ideas are given equal weight and consideration. No decision may be made until each individual member or affiliated group that will be affected by that decision has had a chance to express their opinion on the issue. Individual members and affiliated groups shall retain the option to refuse support to specific federation activities, but may not actively obstruct such activities. In true democratic fashion, decisions for the federation as a whole must be made by a majority of its members.

In most cases, there is no real need for formal meetings for the making of decisions, what is needed is coordination of the actions of the group. Of course, there are times when a decision has to be made, and sometimes very quickly. This will be rare, but sometimes it is unavoidable. The consensus, in that case, would then have to be among a much smaller circle than the general membership of hundreds or thousands. But ordinarily all that is needed is an exchange of information and trust among parties, and a decision reaffirming the original decision will be reached, if an emergency decision had to be made. Of course, during the discussion, there will be an endeavours to clarify any major differences and explore alternative courses of action. And there will be an attempt to arrive at a mutually agreed upon consensus between conflicting views As always, if there should be an impasse or dissatisfaction with the consensus, a vote would be taken and with a 2/3 majority, the matter would be accepted, rejected or rescinded

This is all totally contrary to the practice of Marxist-Leninist parties where the Central Committee unilaterally sets policy for the entire organisation, and arbitrary authority reigns. Anarchists reject centralisation of authority and the concept of a Central Committee. All groups are free associations formed out of committees not revolutionaries disciplined by fear of authority. When the size of the work-groups (which could be fanned around Labour, fundraising, anti-racism, women's rights, food and housing, etc.) becomes cumbersome, the organisations can be decentralised into two or several more autonomous organisations, still united in one large federation. This enables the group to expand limit- lessly while maintaining its anarchic form of decentralised self-management. It is sort of like the scientific theory of a biological cell, dividing and re-dividing, but in a political sense.

However, Anarchist groups aren't even necessarily organised loosely; Anarchism is flexible and structure can be practically nonexistent or very tight, depending upon the type of organisation demanded by the social conditions being faced. For instance, organisation would tighten during military operations or heightened political repression.

Anarchist-Communists reject the Marxist-Leninist concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and a so-called "workers' state" in favour of the mass commune. Unlike members of Leninist parties, whose daily lives are generally similar to present bourgeois lifestyles, Anarchist organisational structures and lifestyles, through communal living arrangements, urban tribes, affinity

groups, squatting, etc., attempt to reflect the Liberated society of the future. Anarchists built all kinds of communes and collective during the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s, but were crushed by the fascists and the Communists. Since the Marxist-Leninists don't build cooperative structures, the nucleus of the new society, they can only see the world in bourgeois political terms. They want to just seize State power and institute their own dictatorship over the people and the workers, instead of crushing State power and replacing it with a free, cooperative society.

Of course, the party, they insist, represents the proletariat, and there is no need for them to organise themselves outside of the party. Yet even in the former Soviet Union the Communist Party membership only represented five percent of the population. This is elitism of the worst sort and even makes the Capitalist parties look democratic by comparison. What the Communist Party was intended to represent in terms of workers' power is never made clear, but in true 1984 "doublethink" fashion, the results are 75 years of political repression and State slavery, instead of an era of "glorious Communist rule". They must be held accountable politically for these crimes against the people, and revolutionary political theory and practice. They have slandered the names of Socialism and Communism.

We reject the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is unbridled oppression, and the Marxist-Leninists and Stalinists must be made to answer for it. Millions have been murdered by Stalin in the name of fighting an internal class war, and millions more were murdered in China Poland, Afghanistan Cambodia, and other countries by Communist movements which followed Stalin's prescription for revolutionary terror. We reject State communism as the worst aberration and tyranny. We can do better than this with the mass commune.

The Anarchist mass commune (sometimes also called a Workers' Council, although there are some differences) is a national continental or transnational federation of economic and political cooperatives and regional communal formations. Anarchists look to a world and a society in which real decisionmaking involves everyone who lives in it - a mass commune - not a few discipline freaks pulling the strings in a so-called "proletarian dictatorship". Any and all dictatorship is bad, it has no deeming social features, yet that is what the Leninists tell us will protect us from counterrevolution. While Marxist-Leninists claim that this dictatorship is necessary in order to crush any bourgeois counterrevolutions led by the Capitalist class or right-wing reactionaries, Anarchists feel that this is itself part of the Stalinist school of falsification. A centralised apparatus, such as a state, is a much easier target for opponents of the revolution than is an array of decentralised communes. And these communes would remain armed and prepared to defend the revolution against anyone who militarily moves against it. The key is to mobilise the people into defence guards, militias and other military preparedness units.

This position by the Leninists of the necessity for a dictatorship to protect the revolution was not proven in the Civil War which followed the Russian revolution: in fact without support of the Anarchists and other left-wing forces, along with the Russian people, the Bolshevik government would have been defeated. And then true to any dictatorship, it turned around and wiped out the Russian and Ukrainian Anarchist movements, along with their left-wing opponents like the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. Even ideological opponents in the Bolshevik party were imprisoned and put to death. Lenin and Trotsky killed millions of Russian citizens right after the Civil War, when they were consolidating State power, which preceded Stalin's bloody rule. The lesson is that we should not be tricked into surrendering the grassroots people's power to dictators who pose as our friends or leaders.

We don't need the Marxist-Leninists' solutions, they are dangerous and deluding. There is another way, but, to much of the left and to many ordinary people, the choice has appeared to be Anarchic "chaos" or the Maoist "Communist" parties, however dogmatic and dictatorial. This is primarily the result of misunderstanding and propaganda. But Anarchism as an ideology provides feasible organisational structures, as well as valid alternative revolutionary theory, which, if utilised could be the basis for organisation just as solid as the Marxist-Leninists (or even more so). Only these organisations will be egalitarian and really for the benefit of people, rather than for the Communist leaders.

Anarchism is not confined to the ideas of a single theoretician, and it allows individual creativity to develop in collective groupings, instead of the characteristic dogmatism of the Marxist-Leninists. Therefore, not being cultist, it encourages a great deal of innovation and experimentation, prompting its adherents to respond realistically to contemporary conditions. It is the concept of making ideology fit the demands of life, rather than trying to make life fit the demands of ideology.

Therefore Anarchists build organisations in order to build a new world, not to perpetuate our domination over the masses of people. We try to build an organised, coordinated international movement aimed at transforming the globe into a mass commune. Such would really be a great overleap in human evolution and a gigantic revolutionary stride. It would change the world as we know it and end the special problems long plaguing humankind. It would be a new era of freedom and fulfilment. LETS GET ON WITH IT, WE'VE GOT A WORLD TO WIN!

General Principles of Anarchist-Communism

Since Anarchist-Communism is currently still the most important and widely accepted form of Anarchism mote needs to be said about this dynamic revolutionary doctrine.

Anarchist-Communism is based on a conception of society that harmoniously unites individual self- interest and social well-being. Although Anarchist-Communists agree with Marx and many Marxist - Leninists that Capitalism must be abolished because of its crisis-ridden nature (here we reject the false term "anarchy of production") and its exploitation of the working class, they do not believe Capitalism is an indispensable, progressive precondition for the transition to a socially beneficial economy. Nor do they believe that the centralised economic planning of State Socialism can provide for the wide diversity of needs or desires. They reject the very idea of the need for a State or that it will just "wither away" of its own accord; or a party to "boss over" the workers or "stage manage" the revolution. In short, while accepting tenets of his economic critique of Capitalism, they do not worship Karl Marx as an infallible leader whose ideas can never be critiqued or revised, as the Marxist-Leninists do; and Anarchist-Communism is not based on Marxist theory.

These Anarchists believe the "personal is political, and the political is personal," meaning that one cannot divorce one's political life from one's personal life. We do not play bureaucratic political roles, and then have a separate life as another social being entirely. Anarchist-Communists recognise that people are capable of determining their own needs and of making the necessary arrangements to satisfy those needs, provided that they have free access to social resources. It is always a political decision whether those resources are to be freely provided to all, so Anarchist-Communists believe in the credo of "from each according to their means, to each according to

their needs". This assures that all will be fed, clothed, and housed as normal social practice, not as demeaning welfare or that certain classes will be better provided for than others.

When not deformed by corrupt social institutions and practices, the interdependence and solidarity of human beings results in individuals who are responsible both for themselves and to the society that makes their well being and cultural development possible. Therefore, we seek to replace the State and Capitalism with a network of voluntary alliances embracing a of social life: production, consumption, health, culture, recreation, and other areas In this way all groups and associations reap the benefits of unity while expanding the range of their freedom. Anarchists believe in free association and federating groups of collectives, workers' councils, food and housing cooperatives, political collectives, with others of all types.

As a practical matter, Anarchist-Communists believe that we should start to build the new society now, as well as fight to crush the old Capitalist one. They wish to create non-authoritarian mutual aid organisations (for food, clothing, housing, funding for community projects and others), neighbourhood assemblies and cooperatives not affiliated with either government or business corporations, and not run for profit, but for social need. Such organisations, if built now, will provide their members with a practical experience in self-management and self-sufficiency, and will decrease the dependency of people on welfare agencies and employers. In short, we can begin now to build the infrastructure for the communal society so that people can see what they are fighting for, not just the ideas in someone's head. That is the real way to freedom.

Capitalism, the State and Private Property

The existence of the State and Capitalism a rationalised by their apologists as being a "necessary evil" due to the alleged inability of the greater part of the population to run their own affairs and those of society, as well as being their protection against crime and violence. Anarchists realise that quite to the contrary, the principal barriers to a free society are State and the institution of private property. It-is the State which causes war, police repression, and other forms of violence, and it is private property-the lack of equal distribution of major social wealth-which causes crime and deprivation.

But what is the State? The State is a political abstraction, a hierarchical institution by which a privileged elite strives to dominate the vast majority of people. The State's mechanisms include a group of institutions containing legislative assemblies, the civil service bureaucracy, the military and police forces, the judiciary and prisons, and the subcentral State apparatus. The government is the administrative vehicle to run the State. The purpose of this specific set of institutions which are the expressions of authority in capitalist societies (and so-called "Socialist states") is the maintenance and extension of domination over the common people by a privileged class, the rich in Capitalist societies, the so-called Communist party in State Socialist or Communist societies like the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

However, the State itself is always an elitist position structure between the rulers and the ruled order- givers and order-takers, and economic haves and have-nots. The State's elite is not just the rich and the super-rich, but also those persons who assume State positions of authority: politicians and juridical officials. Thus the State bureaucracy itself, in terms of its relation to ideological property, can become an elite class in its own right. This administrative elite class of the State is developed not just the through dispensing of privileges by the economic elite, but as well by the separation of private and public life - the family unit and civil society respectively -

and by the opposition between an individual family and the larger society. It is sheer opportunism, brought on by Capitalist competition and alienation. It is a breeding ground for agents of the State.

The existence of the State and a ruling classes, based on the exploitation and oppression of the working class are inseparable. Domination and exploitation go hand-in-hand and in fact this oppression is not possible without force and violent authority. This is why Anarchist-Communists argue that any attempt to use State power as a means of establishing a free, egalitarian society can only be self- defeating, because the habits of commanding and exploiting become ends in themselves. This was proven with the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution (1917-1921). The fact is that officials of the "Communist" State accumulate political power much as the Capitalist class accumulates economic wealth. Those who govern form a distinct group whose only interest is the retention of political control by any means at their disposal. But the institution of Capitalist property, moreover, permits a minority of the population to control and to regulate access to, and the use of all socially produced wealth and natural resources. You have to pay for the land, water, and the fresh air to some giant utility company or real estate firm.

This controlling group may be a separate economic class or the State itself, but in either case the institution of property leads to a set of social and economic relations, Capitalism, in which a small sector of society reaps enormous benefits and privileges at the expense of the labouring minority. The Capitalist economy is based, not upon fulfilling the needs of everyone, but on amassing profit for a few. Both Capitalism and the State must be attacked and overthrown, not one or the other, or one then the other, because the fall of either will not ensure the fall of both. Down with Capitalism and the State!

No doubt, some workers will mistake what I am speaking of as a threat to their personal accumulated property. No: Anarchists recognise the distinction between personal possessions and major Capitalistic property. Capitalistic property is that which has as its basic characteristic and purpose the command of other people's labour power because of its exchange value. The institution of property conditions the development of a set of social and economic relations, which has established Capitalism, and this situation allows a small minority within society to reap enormous benefits and privileges at the expense of the labouring minority. This is the classic scenario of Capital exploiting labour.

Where there is a high social division of labour and complex industrial organisation, money is necessary to perform transactions. It is not simply that this money is legal tender, and it is used in place of direct barter of goods. That is not what we art limited to here: Capital is money, but money as a process, which reproduces and increases its value. Capital arises only when the owner of the means of production finds workers on the market as sellers of their own labour power. Capitalism developed as the form of private property that shifted from the rural agricultural style to the urban, factory style of labour. Capitalism centralises the instruments of production and brings individuals closely alongside of others in a disciplined work force. Capitalism is industrialised commodity production, which makes goods for profit, not for social needs. This is a special distinction of capital and capital alone.

We may understand Capitalism and the basis of our observations, as Capital endowed with will and consciousness. That is, as those people who acquire capital, and function as an elite, moneyed class with enough national and political power to rule society. Further, that accumulated capital is money, and with money they control the means of production that is defined as the mills, mines, factories, land, water, energy and other natural resources, and the rich know that this is

their property. They don't need ideological pretensions, and are under no illusions about "public property".

An economy, such as the one we have briefly sketched, is not based on fulfilling the needs of everyone in society, but instead is based on the accumulation of profits for the few, who live in palatial luxury as a leisure class, while the workers live in either poverty or one or two pay checks removed. You see, therefore, that doing away with government also signifies the abolition of monopoly and personal ownership of the means of production and distribution.

Anarchism, Violence and Authority

One of the biggest lies about Anarchists is that they are mindless bomb throwers, cutthroats, and assassins. People spread these lies for their own reasons: governments, because they are afraid of being overthrown by Social revolution; Marxist-Leninists, because it is a competing ideology with a totally different concept of social organisation and revolutionary struggle; and the Church, because Anarchism does not believe in deities and its rationalism might sway workers away from superstition. It is true that these lies and propaganda are able to sway many people primarily because they never hear the other side. Anarchists receive bad press and suffer a scapegoat of every politician, right or left wing.

Because a Social revolution is an Anarchist revolution, which not only abolishes one exploiting class for another, but all exploiters and the instrument of exploitation, the State. Because it is a revolution for people's power, instead of political power; because it abolishes both money and wage slavery; because

Anarchists aim for total democracy and freedom instead of politicians to represent the masses in Parliament, Congress, or the Communist Party; because Anarchists are for workers' self-management of industry, instead of government regulation; because Anarchists are for full sexual, racial, cultural and intellectual diversity, instead of sexual chauvinism, cultural repression, censorship, and racial oppression; lies have had to be told that the Anarchists are killers, rapists, robbers, mad bombers, unsavoury elements, the worst of the worst.

But let's look at the real world and see who is causing all this violence and repression of human rights. The wholesale murder by standing armies in World Wars I and II, the pillage and rape of former colonial counties, military invasions or so-called "police operations" in Korea and Vietnam - all of these have been done by governments. It is government and state/class rule, which is the source of all violence. This includes all governments. The so-called "Communist" world is not communist and the "Free" world is not free. East and West, Capitalism, private or state remains an inhuman type of society where the vast majority is bossed at work, at home, and in the community. Propaganda (news and literary), policemen and soldiers, prisons and schools, traditional values and morality all serve to reinforce the power of the few and to convince or correct the many into passive acceptance of a brutal degrading and irrational system. This is what Anarchists mean by authority being oppression, and it is just such authoritarian rule which is at work in the United States of America, as well as the 'Communist" governments of China or Cuba.

"What is the thing we call government? Is it anything but organised violence? The law orders you to obey, and if yon don't obey, it will compel you by force - all governments, all law and authority finally rest on force and violence, on punishment or fear of punishment. "

- Alexander Berkman, in ABC of Anarchism

There are revolutionaries, including many Anarchists, who advocate armed overthrow of the capitalist State. They do not advocate or practice mass murder, like the governments of the modern world with their stockpiles of nuclear bombs, poison gas and chemical weapons, huge air forces, navies and armies and who are hostile to one another. It was not the Anarchists who provoked two World Wars where over 100 million persons were slaughtered; nor was it the Anarchists who invaded and butchered the peoples of Korea, Panama, Somalia, Iraq, Indonesia, and other countries who have sustained imperialist military attack. It was not the Anarchists who sent armies of spies all over the world to murder, corrupt, subvert, overthrow and meddle into the internal affairs of other countries like the CIA, KGB, MI6 or other national spy agencies, nor use them as secret police to uphold the home governments in various countries, no matter how repressive and unpopular the regime. Further, if your government makes you a policeman or soldier, you kill and repress people in the name of "freedom" or "law and order".

"You don't question the right of the government to kill, to confiscate and imprison. If a private person should be guilty of the things that the government is doing all the time, you'd brand him a murderer, thief and scoundrel. Bur or long as the violence committed is 'lawful' you approve of it and submit to it. So it is not real violence that you object to, bur people using violence unlawfully."

- Alexander Berkman, in ABC of Anarchism.

If we speak honestly we must admit that everyone believes in violence and practices it, however they may condemn it in others. Either they do it themselves or they have the police or army to do it on their behalf as agents of the state. In fact, all of the governmental institutions we presently support and the entire life of present society are based on violence. In fact America is the most violent country on earth, or as one SNCC comrade, H. Rap Brown, was quoted as saying: "violence is as American as apple pie (!)". The United States goes all over the world committing violence, it assassinates heads of State, overthrows governments, slaughters civilians in the hundreds of thousands, and makes a prison out of captive nations, such as it is doing in Iraq and Somalia, at the present time . We are expected to passively submit to these crimes of conquest, that is the hallmark of a good citizen.

So Anarchists have no monopoly and violence, and when it was used in so-called "propaganda of the deed" attacks, it was against tyrants and dictators, rather than against the common people. These individual reprisals - bombings, assassinations, sabotage - have been efforts at making those in power personally responsible for their unjust acts and repressive authority. But in fact, Anarchists, Socialists, Communists and other revolutionaries, as well as patriots and nationalists, and even reactionaries and racists like the Ku Klux Klan or Nazis have all used violence for a variety of reasons. Who would not have rejoiced if a dictator like Hitler had been slain by assassins, and thus spared the world racial genocide and the Second World War? Further, all revolutions are violent because the oppressing class will not give up power and privileges without a bloody fight. So we have no choice anyway.

Basically, we would all choose to be pacifists. And like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. counselled, we would rather resolve our differences with understanding, love and moral reasoning. We will attempt these solutions first, whenever possible. In the insanity that reigns, however, out movement acknowledge the utility of preparedness. It is too dangerous a world to be ignorant of the

ways to defend ourselves so that we can continue our revolutionary work. Bring acquainted with a weapon and its uses does not mean that you must immediately go out and use that weapon, but that if you need to use it, you can use it well. We are forced to acknowledge that the American progressive and radical movements have been too pacifist to be truly effective. We also realise that open groups that proposed cooperative change and were basically non-violent like the IWW, were crushed violently by the government and finally we have unfortunate example of Dr. King, Jr. himself, who was assassinated in 1968 by a conspiracy of agents of the State, most likely the FBI.

Understand that the more we succeed at our work, the more dangerous will our situation become, because we will then be recognised as a threat to the State. And - make no mistake - the insurrection is coming. An American Intifada that will destabilise the state. So we are talking about a spontaneous, prolonged, rising of the vast majority of the people, and the necessity to defend our Social revolution. Although we recognise the importance of defensive paramilitary violence, and even urban guerrilla attacks, we do not depend upon war to achieve our liberation, for our struggle cannot be won by the force of arms alone. No, the people must be armed beforehand with understanding and agreement of our objectives, as well as trust and love of the revolution, and our military weapons are only an expression of our organic spirit and solidarity. Perfect love for the people, perfect hate for the enemy.

As the Cuban revolutionary, Che Guevara, said: "When one falls, another must take (their) place, and the rage of each death renews the reason for the fight".

The governments of the world commit much of their violence in repressing any attempt to overthrow the State. Crimes of repression against the people have usually benefited those in power, especially if the government is powerful Look what happened in the United States when the Black revolution of the 1960s was repressed. Many protesting injustice were jailed, murdered, injured, or blacklisted - all of which was setup by the State's secret police agencies. The movement was beaten down for decades as a result. So we cannot just depend on mass mobilisations alone, or just engage in underground offen-

sives, if we want to defeat the state and its repression: some mid-place between the two must be found. For the future, our work will include development of collective techniques of self-defence, as well as underground work while we work towards social revolution.

Anarchists and Revolutionary Organisation

Another lie about Anarchism is that they are nihilistic and don't believe in any organisational structure. Anarchists are not opposed to organisation In fact, Anarchism is primarily concerned about analyzing the way in which society is presently organised, i.e., government.

Anarchism is all about organisation, but it is about alternative forms of organisation to what now exists. Anarchism's opposition to authority leads to the view that organisation should be non-hierarchical and that membership would be voluntary. Anarchist revolution is a process of organisation building and rebuilding. This does not mean the same thing as the Marxist-Leninist concept of "party building", which is just about strengthening the role of party leaders and driving out those members those who have an independent position. These purges are methods of domination that the M-L's use to beat all democracy out of their movements, yet they facetiously call this "democratic centralism".

What organisation means within Anarchism is to organise the needs of the people into nonauthoritarian social organisations so that they can take care of their own business on an equal basis. It also means the coming together of like-minded people for the purpose of coordinating the work that both groups and individuals feel necessary for their survival, well being, and livelihood. So because Anarchism involves people who would come together an the basis of mutual needs and interests cooperation is a key element. A primary aim is that the individuals should speak for themselves, and that all in the group be equally responsible for the group's decisions; no leaders or bosses here!

Many Anarchists would even envisage large scale organisational needs in terms of small local groups organised in the workplace, collectives, neighbourhoods, and other areas, who would send delegates to larger committees who would make decisions on matters of wider concern. The job of delegate would not be full-time; it would be rotated. Although their out-of-pocket expenses would be paid, the delegate would be unpaid, recallable and would only voice the group's decisions. The various schools of Anarchism differ in emphasis concerning organisation. For example, Anarcho-Syndicalists stress the revolutionary labour union and other workplace formations as the basic unit of organisation, while the Anarchist-Communists recognise the commune as the highest form of social organisation. Others may recognise other formations as most important, but they all recognise and support free, independent organisations of the people as the way forward.

The nucleus of Anarchist-Communist organisation is the Affinity Group. The affinity group is a revolutionary circle or "cell" of friends and comrades who are in tune with each other both in ideology and as individuals. The affinity group exists to coordinate the needs of the group, as expressed by individuals and by the cell as a body. The group becomes an extended family; the well being of all becomes the responsibility of all.

"Autonomous, communal, and directly democratic, the group combines revolutionary theory with revolutionary lifestyle in its everyday behaviour. It creates a free space in which revolutionaries can remake themselves individually, and also as social beings. " - Murray Bookchin, in Post Scarcity Anarchism

We could also refer to these affinity formations as "groups for living revolution" because they live the revolution now, even though only in seed form. Because the groups are small - from three to fifteen - they can start from a stronger basis of solidarity than mere political strategy alone. The groups would be the number one means of political activity of each member. There are four areas of involvement where affinity groups work:

1. Mutual Aid: this means giving support and solidarity between members, as well as collective work and responsibility.

2. Education: in addition to educating the society at-large to Anarchist ideals, this includes study by members to advance the ideology of the groups, as well as to increase their political, economic, scientific and technical knowledge.

3. Action: this means the actual organising, and political work of the group outside the collective, where all members are expected to contribute.

4. Unity: the group is a form of family, a gathering of friends and comrades, people who care for the well-being of one another, who love and support each other, who strive to live in the

spirit of cooperation and freedom; void of distrust, jealousy, hate, competition and other forms of negative social ideas and behaviour. In short, affinity groups allow a collective to live a revolutionary lifestyle.

A big advantage of affinity groups is that they are highly resistant to police infiltration. Because the group members are so intimate, the groups are very difficult to infiltrate agents into, and even if a group is penetrated, there is no "central office" which would give an agent information about the movement as a whole. Each cell has its own politics, agenda, and objectives. Therefore they would have to infiltrate hundreds, maybe thousands, of similar groups. Further, since the members all know each other, they could not lead disruptions without risk of immediate exposure, which would blunt an operation like the COINTELPRO used by the FBI against the Black and progressive movements ring the 1960s. Further, because there are no leaders in the movement, there is no one to target and destroy the group.

Because they can grow as biological cells grow, by division, they can proliferate rapidly. There could be hundreds in one large city or region. They prepare for the emergence of a mass movement; they will organise large numbers of people in order to coordinate activities as their needs become apparent and as social conditions dictate. Affinity groups function as a catalyst within the mass movement, pushing it to higher and higher levels of resistance to the authorities. But they are ready-made for underground work in the event of open political repression or mass insurrection.

This leads us to the next level of Anarchist organisations, the area and regional federation. Federations are the networks of affinity groups who come together out of common needs, which include mutual aid education, action, and any other work deemed to be needed for the transformation of current society from the authoritarian state to Anarchist-Communism The following is an example of how Anarchist-Communist federations could be structured. First, then is the area organisation, which could cover a large city or county. All like-minded affinity groups in the area would associate themselves in a local federation. Agreements on ideology, mutual aid, and action to be undertaken would be made at meetings in which all can come and have equal voice.

When the local area organisation reaches a size where it is deemed to be too big, the area federation would initiate a Coordinating Consensus Council. The purpose of the Council is to coordinate the needs and actions defined by all the groups, including the possibility of splitting and creating another

federation. Each local area's affinity group would be invited to send representatives to the council with all the viewpoints of their group, and as a delegate they could vote and join in making policy on behalf of the group at the council.

Our next federation would be on a regional basis, say the entire South or Midwest. This organisation would take care of the whole region with the same principles of consensus and representation. Next would come a national federation to cover the U.S.A, and the continental federation, the latter of which would cover the continent of North America. Last would be the global organisations, which would be the networking of all federations worldwide. As for the latter because Anarchists do not recognise national borders and wish to replace the nation- state, they thus federate with all other like- minded people wherever they are living on the planet earth.

But for Anarchism to really work, the needs of the people must be fulfilled. So the first priority of Anarchists is the well being of all; thus we must organise the means to fully and equally fulfil

the needs of the people. First, the means of production, transportation, and distribution must be organised into revolutionary organisations that the workers and the community run and control themselves. The second priority of the Anarchists is to deal with community need organisations, in addition to industrial organising. Whatever the community needs are, then they must be dealt with. This means organisation. It includes cooperative groups to fulfil such needs as health, energy, jobs, childcare, housing, alternative schools, food, entertainment, and other social areas. These community groups would form a cooperative community, which would be a network of community needs organisations and serve as an Anarchistic socio-political infrastructure. These groups should network with those in other areas for mutual aid education, and action, and become a federation on a regional scale.

Third, Anarchists would have to deal with social illness. Not only do we organise for the physical needs of the people, but must also work and propagandise to cure the ills sprouted by the State, which has warped the human personality under Capitalism. For instance, the oppression of women must be addressed. No one can be free if 51 percent of society is oppressed, dominated and abused. Not only must we form an organisation to deal with the harmful effects of sexism, but work to ensure patriarchy is dead by educating society about its harmful effects .The same must be done with racism, but in addition to re-education of society, we work to alleviate the social and economic oppression of Black and other non-white peoples, and empower them for self-determination to lead free lives. Anarchists need to form groups to expose and combat racial prejudice and Capitalist exploitation, and extend full support and solidarity to the Black liberation movement.

Finally, Anarchism would deal with a number of areas too numerous to mention here - science, technology, ecology, disarmament, human rights and so on. We must harness the social sciences and make them serve the people, while we coexist with nature. Authoritarians foolishly believe that it is possible to "conquer" nature, but that is not the issue. We are just one of a number of species which inhabit this planet even if we are the most intelligent. But then other species have not created nuclear weapons, started wars where millions have been killed, or engaged in discrimination against the races of their sub-species, all of which humankind has done. So who is to say which one is the most "intelligent?"

Why Am I An Anarchist?

The Anarchist movement in North America is overwhelmingly white, middle class, and for the most part, pacifist so the question arises: why am I a part of the Anarchist movement, since I am none of those things? Well, although the movement may not now be what I think it should be in North America, I visualise a mass movement that will have hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of Black, Hispanic and other non-white workers in it. It will not be an Anarchist movement that Black workers and the other oppressed will just "join" - it will be an independent movement which has its own social outlook, cultural imperative, and political agenda. It will be Anarchist at its core, but it will also extend Anarchism to a degree no previous European social or cultural group ever has done. I am certain that many of these workers will believe, as I do, that Anarchism is the most democratic, effective, and radical way to obtain our freedom, but that we must be free to design our own movements, whether it is understood or "approved" by North American Anarchists or not. We must fight for our freedom, no one else can free us, but they can help us.

I wrote the pamphlet to: (1) inspire a national anti-racist and anti-cop brutality federation, which would be Anarchist-initiated or at least be heavily participated in by Anarchists; (2) create a coalition between Anarchists and revolutionary Black organisations such as the new Black Panther movement of the 1990s; and (3) to spark a new revolutionary ferment in organisations in the African-American and other oppressed communities, where Anarchism is a curiosity, if that. I thought that if a serious, respected libertarian revolutionary put these ideas forth they would be more likely to be considered than just by a white Anarchist, no matter how well motivated. I believe I am correct about that. So here is why I am an Anarchist.

In the 1960s I was part of a number of Black revolutionary movements, including the Black Panther Party, which I feel partially failed because of the authoritarian leadership style of Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and others on the Central Committee. This is not a recrimination against those individuals, but many errors were made because the national leadership was too divorced from the chapters in cities all over the country, and therefore engaged in "commandism" or forced work dictated by leaders. But many contradictions were also set up because of the structure of the organisation as a Marxist-Leninist group. There was not a lot of inner-party democracy, and when contradictions came up, it was the leaders who decided on their resolution, not the members. Purges became commonplace, and many good people were expelled from the group simply because they disagreed with the leadership.

Because of the over-importance of central leadership, the national organisation was ultimately liquidated entirely, packed up and shipped back to Oakland, California. Of course, many errors were made because the BPP was a young organisation and was under intense attack by the state. I do not want to imply that the internal errors were the primary contradictions that destroyed the BPP. The police attacks on it did that, but, if it were better and more democratically organised, it may have weathered the storm. So this is no mindless criticism or backstabbing attack. I loved the party. And, anyway, not myself or anyone else who critique the party with hindsight, will ever take away from the tremendous role that the BPP played in the Black Liberation movement of the 1960s. But we must look at a full picture of out organisations from that period, so that we do not repeat the same errors.

I think my brief period in the Panthers was very important because it taught me about the limits of - and even the bankruptcy of - leadership in a revolutionary movement. It was not a question of a personality defect on behalf of particular leader, but rather a realisation that many times leaders have one agenda, followers have another.

I also learned this lesson during my association with the African People's Socialist Party during the 1980s. When I had gotten out of the joint I had met Omali Yeshitela while I was confined in Leavenworth (KS.) federal pen, when he was invited to our annual Black Solidarity Bay festivities in 1979.

This association continued when they formed the Black prisoners' organisation, the African National Prison Organisation shortly thereafter. ANPO was definitely a good support organisation, and along with News and Letters Committees the Kentucky branch of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression, and the Social revolutionary Anarchist Federation (now defunct), they wrote letters and made phone calls to have me hospitalised after I had been infected with Tuberculosis, which saved my life. But the group folded when the proposed coalition of founding organisations collapsed due to sectarianism

After I got out of prison, I lost contact with them as they had moved from Louisville to the West Coast. It was not until 1987 that I once again contacted them when we were having a mass

demonstration against police brutality in my hometown. They were invited and came to the demo, along with ANPO and several left-wing forces, and for two years off and on, I had an association with them. But I felt APSP politically was always an authoritarian organisation, and even though was never a member, I became more and more uncomfortable with their organisational policies In the Summer Of 1988, I went to Oakland, California to attend an "organisers' school", but I also wanted to satisfy myself about the internal workings of the group. For six weeks, I worked with them out of their national headquarters in the local community. I was able to determine for myself about internal matters and also abort the politics of the group itself. I found out that about a whole history of purges, factional fights, and the "one man" dictatorial leadership style of the Party. While in Oakland, I was asked to attend a meeting in Philadelphia that Fall to re-establish ANPO.

I attended the Philly meeting, but was very concerned when I was automatically placed as part of a "slate" to be officers of the ANPO group, without any real democratic discussion among the proposed membership, or allowing others to put themselves forward as potential candidates. I was in fact made the highest-ranking officer in the group. Although I still believe that there should be a mass political prisoners' movement and especially a Black prisoners' movement, I became convinced that this was not it. I believe that it will take a true coalition of forces in the Black and progressive movements to build a mass base of support. I got to feeling that these folks just wanted to push the party and its politics, rather than free prisoners, and so I just dropped out and haven't dealt with them since. I was very disillusioned and depressed when I learned the truth. I won't be used by anybody - not for long.

The early stages of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was a contrast in many ways to any Black freedom group to come before or after. Part of the SNCC activists were middle class college intellectuals, with a small number of working class grassroots activists, but they developed a working style that was very anti-authoritarian and was unique to the Civil rights movement. Instead of bringing in a national leader to lead local struggles, like Dr, Martin Luther King Jr. and his group, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, was wont to do, SNCC sent in field organisers to work with the local people and develop indigenous leadership and help organise, but not take over local struggles. They placed their faith in the ability of the people to determine an agenda which would best serve them and lead themselves to obtain their goals rather than being inspired or told what to do by a leader SNCC itself had no strong leaders, even though it had persons in decision-making authority, but they were accountable to membership boards and the community in a way no other group in the civil rights movement was.

SNCC was also a secular organisation, in contrast to SCLC, which was formed by Black preachers and had co-opted their style of organising from the Black church, with a religious authority figure who gave orders to the troops. Today most political commentators or historians still do not want to give full credit to the effectiveness of SNCC, but many of the most powerful and successful struggles of the Civil rights movement were initiated and won by SNCC, including most of the voting rights struggles and the Mississippi phase of the freedom movement. I learned a lot about internal democracy by being a part of SNCC, how it could make or break an organisation, and how it had so much to do with the morale of the members. Everyone was given an opportunity to participate in decision-making, and felt part of a great historical mission, which would change their lives forever. They were right. Even though SNCC gave some lifelong lessons to all of us involved, even if it was destroyed by the rich and their own, who resorted to an authoritarian style in later years.

I also began to have a rethinking process after I was forced to leave de U.S. and go to Cuba, Czechoslovakia and other countries in the "Socialist bloc", as it was called then. It was clear that these countries were essentially police states, even though they had brought many significant reforms and material advances to their peoples over what had existed before. I observed also that racism existed in those countries, along with the denial of basic democratic rights and poverty on a scale I would not have thought possible. I also saw a great deal of corruption by the Communist Party leaders and State administrators, who were well off, while the workers were mere wage slaves. I thought to myself, "there has to be a better way!". There is. It is Anarchism, which I started to read about when I was captured in East Germany and had heard more about when I was eventually thrown into prison in the United States.

Prison is a place where one continually thinks about his other past life, including the examination of new or contrary ideas, I began to think about what I had seen in the Black movement, along with my mistreatment in Cuba, my capture and escape in Czechoslovakia, and my final capture in East Germany. I replayed all this over and over in my head. I was first introduced to Anarchism in 1969, immediately after I was brought back to the U.S. and was placed in the federal lockup in New York City, where I met Martin Sostre. Sostre told me about how to survive in prison, the importance of fighting for prisoners' democratic rights, and about Anarchism. This short course in Anarchism did not stick however, even though I greatly respected Sostre personally, because I did not understand the theoretical concepts.

Finally around 1973, after I had been locked up for about three years, I started receiving Anarchist literature and correspondence from Anarchists who had heard about my case. This began my slow metamorphosis to a confirmed Anarchist, and in fact it was not until a few years later that I came over. During the late 1970s, I was adopted by Anarchist Black Cross-England and also by a Dutch Anarchist group called HAPOTOC (Help A Prisoner Oppose Torture Organising Committee) which organised an instrumental defence campaign. This proved crucial in ultimately getting people all over the world to write the U. S. government to demand my release.

I wrote a succession of articles for the Anarchist press, and was a member of the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, the IWW, and a number of other Anarchist groups in the U.S. and around the world. But I became disheartened by the Anarchist movement's failure to fight white supremacy and its lack of class struggle politics. So, in 1979, I wrote a pamphlet called Anarchism and the Black Revolution, to act as a guide to the discussion of these matters by our movement. Finally, in 1983, I was released from prison, after having served almost 15 years.

For all these years, the pamphlet influenced a number of Anarchists who were opposed to racism and also wanted a more class struggle-oriented approach than the movement then afforded. Meanwhile I had fallen away from the Anarchist movement in disgust, and it was not until 1992 when I was working in my hometown of Chattanooga, Tennessee, as an anti-racist community organiser, that I ran into an Anarchist named John Johnson and once again made contact. He gave me an issue of Love and Rage newspaper, and as a result, I contacted Chris Day of Love and Rage, and comrades in WSA in New York. The rest, as they say, is history. I have been back with a vengeance ever since.

All of a sudden, I see there are now others in the movement who understand the workings of white supremacy and they have encouraged me to rewrite this pamphlet I have gratefully done so. Why am I an Anarchist? I have an alternative vision for the revolutionary process. There is a better way. Let us get on with it!

What I Believe

All anarchists do not believe in the same things. There are differences and the field is broad enough that those differences can coexist and be respected. So I don't know what others believe, I just know what I believe in and I will spell out it simply, but thoroughly.

I believe in Black liberation, so I am a Black revolutionary. I believe that Black people are oppressed both as workers and a distinct nationality, and will only be freed by a Black revolution, which is an intrinsic part of a Social revolution. I believe that Blacks and other oppressed nationalities must have their own agenda, distinct world-view, and organisations of struggle, even though they may decide to work with white workers.

I believe in the destruction of the world Capitalist System, so I am an anti-imperialist. As long as Capitalism is alive on the planet, there will be exploitation, oppression and nation-states. Capitalism is responsible for the major world wars, numerous brush wars, and millions of people starving for the profit motive of the rich countries in the West.

I believe in racial justice, so I am an anti-racist. The Capitalist system was and is maintained by enslavement and colonial oppression of the African people, and before there will be a social revolution white supremacy must be defeated. I also believe that Africans in America are colonised and exist as an internal colonial of the U.S, white mother country. I believe that white workers must give up their privileged status, their "white identity", and must support racially oppressed workers in their fights for equality and national liberation. Freedom cannot be bought by enslaving and exploiting others.

I believe in social justice and economic equality, so I am a Libertarian Socialist. I believe that society and all parties responsible for its production should share the economic products of labour. I do not believe in Capitalism or the state, and believe they both should be overthrown and abolished I accept the economic critique of Marxism, but not its model for political organising. I accept the antiauthoritarian critique of Anarchism, but not its rejection of the class struggle.

I believe in workers control of society and industry, so I am an Anarcho-Syndicalist. Anarchist Syndicalism is revolutionary labour unionism, where direct action tactics are used to fight Capitalism and take over industry I believe that the factory committees, workers' councils and other labour organisations should be the workplaces, and should take control from the Capitalists after a direct action campaign of sabotage, strikes, sit-downs, factory occupations and other actions.

I do not believe in government, and so I am an Anarchist. I believe that government is one of the worst forms of modem oppression, is the source of war and economic oppression, and must be overthrown. Anarchism means that we will have more democracy, social equality, and economic prosperity. I oppose all forms of oppression found in modem society: patriarchy, white supremacy, Capitalism, State Communism, religious dictates, gay discrimination, etc.

Further Reading:

Biography Speaking of anarchism, racism, and black liberation Authoritarian Leftists: Kill the Cop in Your Head Back from hell: Black power and treason to whiteness inside prison walls

BEYOND NATIONALISM, BUT NOT WITHOUT IT By Ashanti Alston

By Ashanti Alston

What motivates me more than anything else about anarchism and its relevance to Black revolution is that it has offered me some powerful insights into why we have not been able to recover from our defeat (the 60's revolution) and advance forward to the kinds of untities, organizations and activities that make for invincible revolutionary movements.

There are all kinds of Nationalisms and there are all kinds of reactions to nationalism. I would like to address this issue from the perspective of someone who has moved through and grown within some of the Black Nationalisms specific to the Black Community. I would like to share what that means to me as it pertains to the questions you raised for this ONWARD theme of Anarchism and Nationalism.

"...we have been taught either to ignore our differences, or to view them as causes for separation and suspicion rather than as forces for change. Without community there is no liberation, only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. But community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist. " - Audre Lorde

Great quote. I've taken it from the latest issue of Arsenal #4 (page 4) as it introduces its own discussion into the very same theme. As a Black anarchist TIRED of primarily white anarchists just totally dismissing nationalism, I truly appreciate Arsenal & Onward taking this on as two of the newest newspaper/mags on the scene.

Black nationalism saved my life, in a sense, as a teenager in the 1960's. It "jarred" my unconscious acceptance of amerikkanism dogging my peoples and helped me to see the larger picture. I am a 60's child. There was Malcolm, there was H. Rap Brown and Stokeley Carmichael of the Black Power movement, and then there was the Black Panther Party. All were nationalists, all represent, also, an evolution of nationalism within the black community. But because of the totally racist, genocidal dynamic within this Babylonian Empire, the black nationalist understood that we must…we must…we must primarily look to ourselves to free ourselves. Point blank. And none of these thinker felt it was necessary to 'check in' with The White Man (from the ruler to the revolutionary) to see if it was okay. Ha! Picture that. It was about our survival as a people, not as that mythical "working class" or that equally mythical "citizen." SO, for me, as this teenager who had just witnessed the 60's Rebellions in my own hometown, my own thoroughly racist hometown, nationalism was a lifesaver. WE MUST LOVE EACH OTHER. BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL. WE MUST CONTROL OUR OWN COMMUNITIES. Etcetera, etcetera.

Its funny cause as an anarchist searching for some good anarchist shit from the 60's to be able to hold up and show "proof" that the anarchist were better on the position of Nationalism than the Marxists and Leninists, I found hardly anything! I found some positive stuff from a "libertarian" publication but to my surprise they represented the "anarcho-CAPITIALIST tendency! Yet, I found them to be on point and consistent on RESPECTING nationalism and national liberation. ("The Libertarian Forum" of the late 60's and early 70's. Karl Hess, Joseph Peden, and Murray N. Rothbard). They, at least, understood that black people's nationalist struggle was a struggle against the State, the Babylonian state. They, also, looked at what the nationalist groups were doing in their actual grassroots practice, like creating concrete defenses against repression

and alternatives in survival institutions. Thus, they liked what the Panthers were doing on the ground through their programs and supported that kind of nationalism as being compatible with "anarchism on the ground." Paul Goodman made similar observations of the early civil rights movement groups. But it was understood that these groups were dealing with issues of survival against genocide, and that these groups were developing their own analyses and programs to rally their communities. One last thing about the libertarians of LF, they interestingly enough were critical of the Panthers when the Party turned towards Marxism and other authoritarian ideologies because in their "on the ground" practice the survival programs were no longer spontaneous responses to specific oppressions but increasingly had to be kept under the tight control of the Party.

Nationalism and statism are different in that nationalism can be anti-state. But they can have commonalities in that nationalism may only be against a particular kind of state, such as a Racist State, or a Fascist State. Anarchism and nationalism are similar in that they are both anti-statist, but what does it mean when the specific anarchist movements within a specific country are racist and dismissive of any and all nationalism, be it reactionary or revolutionary???? For me, even the nationalism of a Louis Farrakhan is about saving my people, though it is also thoroughly sexist, capitalist, homophobic and potentially fascist. Yet, it has played an important part in keeping a certain black pride and resistance going. Their "on the ground" work is very important in keeping an anti-racist mentality going. As a black anarchist, that's MY issue to deal with cuz they'se MY FOLKS. But it points to where anarchism and nationalism have differences, and that is in anarchists having NO understanding of what it means to be BLACK in this fucked up society. We do not have the luxury of being so intellectual about this excruciating boot on our collective neck, this modern-day middle-passage into the Prison Industrial Complex, this…that…this…that.

As a postmodernist anarchist, identity politics is important to me. Go back to Audre Lorde's quote. Every time I hear someone talk about my people as if we are just some "working class" or "proletariat"

I wanna get as far away from that person or group as possible, anarchist, Marxist, whatever. As a postmodernist anarchist I also find my people's experience the font from which we will find our way to liberation and power. That's what I get from being the "insurrection of subjugated knowledges. My nationalism gave me that kind of pride because it was such a rejection of White thinking or at least a decentering of the primacy of white thought, capitalist, socialist, whatever. I say this to say that folks outside of our experience need to respect that they aint got no monopoly on revolutionary thinking and dam sure aint got none on revolutionary practice. It is easy to sit back and intellectualize about our nationalism from the modernist, eurocentric framework of rational, scientific, materialist models. While one does that, it is our nationalism which constantly rally our people come together, remember our history, love ourselves, dream on and fight back. Black anarchists and anti-authoritarian revolutionaries understand the limitations of nationalism in terms of its historical sexism, hierarchy, or its modernist trappings in general. But we also recognize anarchism modernist trappings in the form of American racist privilege when it comes to people of color.

The efforts of Lorenzo Kom'boa Erving, Greg Jackson and others to build an organization/federation of black community partisans/organizers is an example of uniting black revolutionary nationalism and anarchism. I believe that Black Fist, even if called generally a people of color or third world antiauthoritarian organization, understood the necessity to be grounded in the experiences of black and brown communities. Thus, the experiences of the Panthers and the

Brown Berets and other like groups were essential. The question seems to be whether white anarchists and anti-authoritarians can work with such groups. Even if those two groups no longer exists, their experiences are important.

White folks need to deal with being ANTI-RACIST ALLIES to folks of color communities and activists. Activists in particular because we are usually whites' entry point into any possible relationship with our communities.. Anarchist theory and practice cannot take the form of a mere adherence to the founding fathers and canonal practices, such as Kropotkin, Bakunin, and the Spanish Civil War. Tired of hearing it! Anarchism HERE in Babylon must reflect our unique problems and possibilities for struggle. Our struggles are not just against capitalism. Too simple. Our struggles are not just against racism. That's, also, too simple. There's all kinds of negative isms we are fighting against and just as importantly, all kinds of worlds we are fighting for. That's why I feel that the whole idea and practice of "convergences" and "spokescouncils" are sooooo important to activists in general to learn from and enhance because they are about making space for all "Voices" to be heard and factored into the decisionmaking so that whatever activities comes forth from it prefigures the kind of new worlds we truly want.

This rambles, right? My apologies. I end this by advising: WHITE ANARCHISTS, DEAL WITH BEING THE BEST ANTI-RACIST ALLIES YOU CAN. WE NEED YOU BUT WE WILL DO THIS SHIT WITHOUT YOU.

To my folks of color:

COME ENVISION…envision a world, of worlds within our world where there's principled co-existence within the wonderful diversity of the Black Community.

Harlems / Spanish harlems / watts / hip-hop communities / villages of the Carolina coast / college communities / gay-lesbian-transgender communities / zulu nation / new afrikan / religious communities that come together mainly on Saturday or Sunday / squatter communities / outlaw communities / kemetic communities / ibo-ghanaian-sierra leonean-ethiopian-rasta neighborhoods / nomadic poet- artist tribes / and then those of us who just be plain ignant and harmless and crazy when we have to be and fun-loving and like to journey through and between communities and sometimes just create new mixed ones…WHAT IF ? …and HOW ?

Ella Baker said we can do it if we can trust ourselves and get away from leadership-led revolution; Kwesi Balagoon said we can do it if we willing to create a chaos that will shut this mutha down; Audre Lorde said we can do it if we LEARN TO LOVE AND RESPECT OUR BEAUTIFUL DIVERSITY and reject the tools of our oppressors; Harriet Tubman daid aint a better way t live THAN AT-WAR FOR A RIGHTEOUS CASUE; and Franz Fanon said if we smack that mutha across the face, drive that pig outta your territory at the point of a gun IS LIBERATING FOR THE SOUL.

WHAT IF ? Envision it…HOW?…

Like Huey Newton's community of communities, BEYOND NATIONALISM and fully self-determining, embracing our diversity of beliefs, lifestyles and non-exploitative economic arrangements, reuniting Earth-loving peoples with a loving Earth.

Through the Imagination, All is possible.

Originally appeared on Anarchist Panther Zine #1 and taken from Anarchist Panther

Further Reading:

Biography The Panthers, the Black Liberation Army and struggle to free all political prisoners and prisoners of war Toward a Vibrant & Broad African-Based Anarchism

ANARCHY CAN'T FIGHT ALONE By Kuwasi Balagoon

By Kuwasi Balagoon

Of all ideologies, anarchy is the one that addresses liberty and equalitarian relations in a realistic and ultimate fashion. It is consistent with each individual having an opportunity to live a complete and total 1 ife. With anarchy, the society as a whole not only maintains itself at an equal expense to all, but progresses in a creative process unhindered by any class, caste or party. This is because the goals of anarchy don't include replacing one ruling class with another, neither in the guise of a fairer boss or as a party.

This is key because this is what separates anarchist revolutionaries from Maoist, socialist and nationalist revolutionaries who from the onset do not embrace complete revolution. They cannot envision a truly free and equalitarian society and must to some extent embrace the socialization process that makes exploitation and oppression possible and prevalent in the first place.

When I first became a revolutionary and accepted the doctrine of nationalism as a response to genocide practiced by the United States government, I knew as I do now that the only way to end the evil practices of the US was to crush the government and the ruling class that shielded itself through that government was through protracted guerrilla warfare.

Armed with that knowledge, I set out the initial organizing of the Black Panther Party until the state's escalation of the war against the Black people that was begun with the invasion of Africa to capture slaves made it clear to me that to survive and contribute I would have to go underground and literally fight.

Once captured for armed robbery, I had the opportunity to see the weakness of the movement and put the state's offensive in perspective. First, the state rounded up all the organizers pointed out to it by agents who had infiltrated the party as soon as it had begun organizing in N.Y. It charged these people with conspiracy and demanded bails so high that the party turned away from its purposes of liberation of the black colony to fund raising. At that point, leadership was imported rather than developed locally and the situation deteriorated quickly and sharply. Those who were bailed out were those chosen by the leadership, regardless of the wishes of the rank and file or fellow prisoners of war, or regardless of the relatively low bail of at least one proven comrade.

Under their leadership, "political consequences" (attacks) against occupation forces ceased altogether. Only a Fraction of the money collected for the Purpose of bail went towards bail. The leaders began to live high off the hog while the rank and file sold papers, were filtered out leaving behind so many robots who wouldn't challenge policy until those in jail publicly denounced the leadership.

How could a few jerks divert so much purpose and energy for so long? How could they neutralize the courage and intellect of the cadre? The answers to these questions are that the cadre accepted their leadership and accepted their command regardless of what their intellect had or had not made clear to them. The true democratic process which they were willing to die for, for the sake of their children, they would not claim for themselves.

These are the same reasons that the people's Republic of China supported UNITA and the reactionary South African government in Angola; that the war continued in Southeast Asia after the Americans had done the bird; why the Soviet Union, the product of the first Socialist revolution is not providing the argument that it should and could through being a model

This is not to say that the people of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Zimbabwe or Cuba aren't better off Because of the struggles they endured. It is to say that the only way to make a dictatorship of the proletariat Is to elevate everyone to being proletariat and deflate all the advantages of power that translate into the wills of a few dictating to the majority the possibility must be prevented of any individual or group of individuals being able to enforce their wills over any other individual's private life Or to extract social consequences for behavior preferences or ideas.

Only an anarchist revolution has on its agenda to deal with these goals. This Would seem to galvanize the working class, déclassé intellectuals, colonized third world nations and some members of the petty bourgeois and alright bourgeoise. But this is not the case.

That China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Mozambique would build round a Marxist ideology to drive out invaders and rebuild feudal economies in the midst of western imperialisms designs and efforts to reinvade and recolonize is a point that can be argued in the light of the international situation it is one thing that they don't back the will of the people as much as they chose allies in the East- West wars fought on the ground of the non-white colonies. It is another thing that Anarchy ceases to inflame or take the lead in combating fascism and imperialism here in North America with the history of the Wobblies, the western federation of minors and other groups who have made their mark on history. It is a denial of our historic task, the betrayal of Anarchists who died resisting tyranny in the past, malingering in the face of horrible conditions. It is the theft of an option to the next generation and forfeiture of our own lives through faint hearts.

We permit people of other ideologies to define Anarchy rather than bring our views to the masses and provide models to show the contrary. We permit corporations to not only lay off workers and to threaten the balance of workers while cutting their salaries, but to poison the air and water to boot. We permit the police, Klan and Nazis to terrorize whatever sector of the population they wish without repaying them back in any kind. In short, by not engaging in mass organizing and delivering war to the oppressors we become Anarchists in name only.

Because Marxists and nationalists ain't doing this to a large extent doesn't make it any less a shame. Our inactivity creates a void that this police state with its reactionary press and definite goals are filling. The parts of people's lives supposedly touched by mass organizing and revolutionary inspiration that sheds a light that encourages them to unveil a new day, instead are being manipulated by conditions of which apathy is no less a part than poisonous uncontested reactionary propaganda. To those who believe in a centralized party with a program for the masses this might mean whatever their subjective analysis permits. But to us who truly believe in the masses and believe that they should have their lives in their hands and know that freedom is a habit, this can only mean that we have far to go.

In the aftermath of the Overtown rebellion, the Cuban community conceded as lost souls by Castro came out clearly in support of the Black colony. And predictably the Ku Klux Klan, through an Honorary FBI agent Bill Wilkenson, made no bones about supporting the rights of businesses and the business of imperialism. Third World colonies throughout the United States face genocide and it is time for anarchists to join the oppressed combat against the oppressors. We must support in words and actions, self-determination, and self-defense for third world peoples.

It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano- Mexi- cano people endorse nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination or agree with anarchism as being the only road to self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses. It is not only racism but compliance with the enemy to stand outside of the social arena and permit America to continue to practice genocide against the third world captive colonies because although they resist, they don't agree with us. If we truly know that Anarchy is the best way of life for all people, we must promote it, defend it and know that the people who are as smart as we are will accept it. To expect people to accept this, while they are being wiped out as a nation without allies ready to put out on the line what they already have on the line is crazy.

Where we live and work, we must Not only escalate discussion and study Groups, we must also organize on the ground level. The landlords must be contested through rent strikes and rather than develop strategies to pay the rent, we should develop strategies to take the buildings. We must not only recognize the squatters movement for what it is, but support and embrace it. Set up communes in abandoned buildings, sell scrap cars and aluminum cans. Turn vacant lots into gardens. When our children grow out of clothes, we should have places where we can take them, clearly marked anarchist clothing exchanges and have no bones about looking for clothing there first. And of course we should relearn how to preserve food; we must learn construction and ways to take back our lives, help each other move and stay in shape.

Let's keep the American and Canadian flags flying at half mast… I refuse to believe that Direct Action has been captured.

Further Reading:

Kuwasi at 60 Trial Statement The Continuing Appeal of Anti-Imperialism< Letters from Prison<

ANARCHISM'S FUTURE IN AFRICA By Sam Mbah

By Sam Mbah
Excerpt from African Anarchism: The History of a Movement
Chapter 7: Anarchism's Future in Africa

Anarchism in a World Context

The prospects for anarchism on the African continent are, in the final analysis, inextricably tied to the future of anarchism worldwide. Owing to its internationalist outlook and platform, the future of anarchism must be appraised within a global context; any attempt to localize it is bound to yield a distorted outcome. The obstacles to anarchism are, in the main, global; only their specifics are determined by local circumstances as is the case in Africa.

The crises of capitalism and, lately, marxist "socialism" worldwide have, historically speaking, assured the future of anarchism. Marx's devastating critique of capitalism as a mode of production remains overall as valid today as when Marx himself first unleashed it. But the admirable logic and systematic approach of marxism has, ultimately, been undone by marxism's internal contradictions.

Marxism's overt attachment to the state system and its structures, as the convulsions in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia have clearly demonstrated, is a fundamental flaw. It has made a mockery of marxism's stated goals (freedom, socialism, and a classless society). The fact that there are still a few authoritarian state socialist outposts - China, North Korea, and Cuba - does not disprove this conclusion. Two outcomes in these nations seem very likely: a collapse of the state socialist ideology and system, as occurred in Eastern Europe, as these states lose their capacity to hold out on their own (Cuba, North Korea); and a transformation from state socialism to state capitalism - indeed, to a system with notable similarities to Italian-style fascism (China).

Either way, state socialism, like capitalism, is doomed. Throughout history, the overall tendency in the development of human society has been toward social equality and greater individual freedom. The pace has seemed agonizingly slow and there have been innumerable setbacks, but the overall trend is undeniable. Change has been the one constant in this development, and it almost certainly will be the one constant in the future. Given the endemic and irresolvable crises of both capitalism and state socialism, humanity's next step must almost inevitably be toward greater individual freedom and greater social equality - that is, toward anarchism, and especially toward anarchism's social expressions, anarchosyndicalism and anarchocommunism.

Marxist "communism" is a failed experiment. It simply didn't deliver the goods (freedom, social wellbeing and social equality); and given its history in the 20th century, it seems obvious that it cannot deliver the goods.

Neither can capitalism, including the laissez-faire variety of which American "Libertarians" are so enamored. Mere elimination of the state while retaining a capitalist economy would not eliminate hierarchy, domination, and the class structure. It would not and could not lead to a truly positive freedom. The best that it could produce would be a somewhat increased freedom from external interference.

Nearly a century ago, Emma Goldman defined "positive freedom" as the "freedom to [do]." While gross disparities exist in the distribution of wealth and income, it seems obvious that this positive freedom will exist meaningfully for only a small number of individuals - and social equality will remain an illusion. Of course, positive freedom is a relative, not an absolute, freedom; the best that we can strive for is equal positive freedom. And we cannot achieve that under any form of capitalism.

So, marxist "socialism" promised (but failed to deliver) equal positive freedom, while brutally suppressing the "negative" freedoms (freedom from restraint/coercion); and capitalism has delivered only severely restricted negative freedoms. And it does not even contemplate equal positive freedom.

Humankind can do better.

The African Condition

Africa today lies prostrate, bleeding, and embattled on all fronts, a victim of capitalist and, to a great extent, state socialist ambitions. The heart-rending misery of its peoples, the conditions of abject poverty, squalor and disease in which they live, exist side by side with the wanton luxury, rapacity, and corruption of its leaders. The misery of the overwhelming majority is the result of the opulence of a few, whose stranglehold on social produce and resources, in conjunction with the power of international capital, confers to them the virtual power of life and death over the majority.[139]

Acting as middlemen and commissioned agents to multinational corporations, awarding contracts and licenses, the local business class appropriates to itself, with the help of the state, Africa's social surplus. While the local business class is very privileged in comparison with the rest of the population, it is still in a subservient role in relation to foreign capital; this, of course, is a result of the retention of the colonial economic structure in the post-colonial period.[140]

This is accompanied by coercion and massive repression of all forms of protest by the poor majority. Wages in Africa are among the worst anywhere; they are so low that they can barely guarantee basic subsistence. And the slave wages paid are perpetually "in arrears," going unpaid for months on end.

The situation in the self-styled "socialist" states is not any better. The ruling socialist party cadres and the state are, for all practical purposes, fused into one. The net effect is that the process of primitive accumulation (for the benefit of a small minority) proceeds at an even faster rate than in openly capitalist states.

Because the local capitalist class is weak and dependent on foreign capital - and thus the state is relatively stronger than in developed capitalist countries - and because in "socialist" African countries the state is the sole owner of the means of production, the struggle for state power in Africa is fierce, often ruthlessly so. This explains the ease and regularity with which African politicians, once in power, transform themselves overnight into sit-tight rulers and presidents for life, impervious to the deteriorating socioeconomic conditions of their countries.

On a global level, the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world is characterized by unequal exchange and marginalization. The process works like this: Africa is consigned to the production of raw materials and primary goods at cheap rates, while it pays for finished goods and products at exorbitant rates. Because of this unequal exchange, African nations are debtor nations that must resort to external loans. The result is that sub-Saharan African nations are indebted to a current total of well over $300 billion. This, naturally, exacts its toll on national economies. An average of 40% of all foreign exchange earnings goes to debt service charges annually, leaving little or nothing for development needs.

The 1980s witnessed the collapse of economies across the continent. In response to this, the developed countries, acting under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, formulated a scorched-earth Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) which they forced down the throats of most African countries (see Chapter five). At the time of this writing, 35 African countries have been forced to adopt the program since 1985. It entails drastic devaluation of national currencies, the introduction of "market reforms," and deregulation of national economies, including the privatization of state-owned industries and corporations.

In the 1990s, the situation has gone from bad to worse. Negative growth rates are the order of the day, as are unemployment, triple-digit inflation, falling manufacturing capacity utilization, and a rising crime rate. And those bearing this burden are primarily the poor, workers, and peasants. Many economists, including capitalist economists, agree that Africa's debt load is, in fact, unrepayable.[141]

Against this backdrop, parts of Africa have erupted in orgies of violence, effectively spelling the beginning of the collapse of the modern nation-state system on the continent; and the rise of a new, angry generation during this chaos is an important factor in determining how and in which direction the present crisis is resolved.

However much we may want to explain away the events in Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, Algeria, and, not least of all, Nigeria and Zaire,

the fact is that they have their roots in the state-capitalist system and in the social and economic relations it engenders. The modern nation state system, like the empire state system before it, has failed Africa, as it has failed the rest of the world.

Anarchism and the National Question in Africa

Perhaps the single most important question in the breakdown of the modern nation state is the "national question," also called the right to "self-determination."[142] The debate revolves around the rights of different ethnic groups to autonomous socio-cultural development within given states.

The national question is of particular relevance to Africa given the heterogeneity inside its component states. Many civil conflicts on the continent have been blamed, directly or indirectly, on the absence of homogenous populations. The problem is accentuated by the solutions proffered by both capitalism and state socialism: the one offers individuals and groups liberty without equality; and the other offers equality without liberty.

Common to both systems, however, is a strident appeal to patriotism, a concept that Bakunin contemptuously dismissed as the united interest of the privileged class. [143] Hiding behind patriotic appeals, the state in Africa imposes injustices and misery on its subjects, as, of course, it does everywhere else. And patriotism produces the false consciousness - in which individuals act directly against their own self-interest - that allows individuals to condone, indeed support, the injustice and misery caused by the state system. The state, in Bakunin's words, "restrains, it mutilates, it kills humanity in [its subjects], so that… they shall never raise themselves beyond the level of the citizen to the level of a man."[144]

Capitalist democracy and state socialism have both achieved the highest degree of intensified racial and national oppression. Marxist support for the principle of national self-determination is as illusory as is capitalist support of individual freedom.

G.P. Maximoff elucidates:

National rights are not a principle in themselves, but a result of the principle of freedom. No nation or nationality, as a natural association of individuals on the basis of common language, can find suitable conditions for its normal development within the confines of a capitalist environment and state organization. Stronger nations conquer the weaker ones and make every effort to dismember them by means of artificial assimilation. For that reason, national domination is a constant companion of the state and of capitalism. [145]

The national question in Africa, therefore, is only one component of the principal problem - namely, the attainment of true freedom and equality. The "national question" is thus peripheral to the real interests of Africa's working class and peasants. As long as capitalism and the state system exist, "self- determination" of nationalities means little. Maximoff notes that without fundamental change, "The right of a nation to 'self-determination' and to independent sovereign existence is nothing but the right of the national bourgeoisie to the unlimited exploitation of its proletariat."[146]

Having said that, anarchism is not in any way opposed to the rights of oppressed nationalities or ethnic groups in Africa or elsewhere. But anarchism stands above the narrow and petty ambitions associated with the quest for national self-determination. Anarchists see freedom, equality, and justice as higher goals than national interests, and the struggle for these higher goals must

necessarily be international. The point, of course, is that the state, every state - no matter how nationalist - is an enemy of these goals. Maximoff explains:

Nations which achieve their right to self-determination and which become states, in their turn begin to deny national rights to their own subordinate minorities, to persecute their languages, their desires, and their right to be themselves. In this manner, 'self-determination' not only brings the nation concerned none of that internal freedom in which the proletariat is most interested, but also fails to solve the national problem. On the contrary, it becomes a threat to the world, since states must always aim to expand at the expense of their weaker neighbors. [147]

For that reason, anarchism repudiates any attempt to solve the national question within the context of the state system. Maximoff argues:

A real and full solution will be possible only in conditions of Anarchy, in a communism emanating from the liberty of the individual and achieved by the free association of individuals in communes, of communes in regions, and regions in nations - associations founded in liberty and equality and creating a natural unity in plurality. [148]

Anarchists demand the liberation of all existing colonies and support struggles for national independence in Africa and around the world as long as they express the will of the people in the nations concerned. However, anarchists also insist that the usefulness of "self-determination" will be very limited as long the state system and capitalism - including marxist state capitalism - are retained.

The implications of this for Africa are immediately obvious. A viable solution to the myriad of problems posed by the national question in Africa, such as internecine civil conflicts, is realizable only outside the context of the state system. This requires the destruction of the state system, and concerted international solidarity and revolutionary actions. The elimination of the state system is a long-term goal that will be difficult to achieve, but it is definitely preferable to the ongoing mechanistic approach as expressed in the creation of a multiplicity of unviable nation states across the continent.

Anarchism — The Way Forward for Africa

The relevance of anarchism to human society has nowhere been more obvious than it is in Africa.

Given the multitude of problems that stare the peoples of Africa in the face, the debilitating socioeconomic conditions under which a great majority of them live, and the overall economically deprived status of Africa vis-a-vis the other continents, anarchism is really the only liberating concept capable of turning "the dark continent" in a truly forward-looking direction.

Things have gone haywire for too long; only a drastic cure can satisfy an increasingly angry, bitter and restive population stretching from Cape Town to Cairo. Conditions include the seemingly endemic problem of ethnic conflicts across the continent; the continued political and economic marginalization of Africa at the global level; the unspeakable misery of about 90% of Africa's population; and, indeed, the ongoing collapse of the nation state in many parts of Africa.

Given these problems, a return to the "anarchic elements" in African communalism is virtually inevitable. The goal of a self-managed society born out of the free will of its people and devoid of authoritarian control and regimentation is as attractive as it is feasible in the long run.

At the global level, human civilization is passing through a period of transition occasioned by the collapse of marxist "socialism" and the evidently insuperable crisis of capitalism and the state system.

So, where do we go from here? As we noted earlier, all advances in human history to this point have been made possible by humanity's quest for both freedom and human solidarity. Since this craving seems a natural instinct and, as such, is not going to disappear anytime soon, it follows that the continued evolution of society will be in the direction of freedom, equality, and community.

The process of anarchist transformation in Africa might prove comparatively easy, given that Africa lacks a strong capitalist foundation, well-developed class formations and relations of production, and a stable, entrenched state system. What is required for now is a long-term program of class consciousness building, relevant education, and increased individual participation in social struggles. Meanwhile, the crises and mutations in capitalism, marxist socialism, and the state system, individually and collectively, cannot but accelerate. For Africa in particular, long-term development is possible only if there is a radical break with both capitalism and the state system - the principal instruments of our arrested development and stagnation. Anarchism is Africa's way out.

[139] Ake, C. A Political Economy of Africa. New York: Longman, 1981, p. 33.

[140] Williams, G. in Gutkind and Waterman, eds., African Social Studies. London: Heinemann, 1977, p. 176.

[141] See Pius Okigbo's paper, "Africa's External Debt Crisis," presented at a public symposium, University of Lagos, November 1989.

[142] Maximoff, G.P. Program of Anarcho-Syndicalism. Sydney: Monty Miller Press, 1985, p. 46.

[143] Bakunin, M. Marxism, Freedom and the State. London: Freedom Press, 1984, p. 32.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Maximoff, Op. Cit., p. 45.

[146] Ibid., p. 46.

[147] Ibid., p. 47.

[148] Ibid.

**** **Further Reading:**

African Anarchism: The History of a Movement An interview with Nigerian anarchist Sam Mbah Global capitalist crisis and the Nigerian fuel tax uprising<

DOMINGO PASSOS:THE BRAZILIAN BAKUNIN

Translation: Paul Sharkey

'I woke at 5.00 am. Passos, who had been up and about for hours, was sitting on his bed reading Determinism and Responsibility by Hamon. I grabbed a towel and went downstairs to wash my face. When I came back from the yard, after drying off, I saw two individuals. It was a moment or two before I realised who they were. With revolvers drawn they spoke to me and asked me harshly:

"Where's Domingos Passos?"

Anticipating another of the attacks that our comrade had been through so often before, I was keen to cover for him and said that he was not around. I told them:

"There's no Domingos Passos living here!"

This brief extract from a 16 March 1923 declaration by the workman Orlando Simoneck, carried in the newspaper A Patria, clearly reflects a few features of the situation sampled by the black youngster, carpenter by trade, anarchist and active member of the Civil Construction Workers' Union (UOCC): by 1923 'Comrade Passos' had become a special target for the Rio police as well as one of the best loved and respected worker militants in the (then) Federal District. Another feature of this comrade, rightly identified by Simoneck, was his relentless self-educational drive, his thirst for learning and culture, which found him spending his mornings poring over books in the little collection belonging to Florentine de Carvalho who lived in the same house in the Rua Barâo in Sâo Félix, only a couple of paces from the union local.

We do not know the precise year of Passos's birth (it was probably towards the end of the 19th century), but, from the books of Edgar Rodrigues, we know that he was born in Rio de Janeiro state. We find his first appearance in social struggles of the time as a UOCC delegate at the 3rd Brazilian Workers' Congress (1920) at which he was elected as travel secretary for the Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB). Passos had been selected for that post because he stood out in the ranks of the organised proletariat on account of his intellect and oratorical gifts which he had honed in the day to day struggles of his trade. In 1920 Passos worked with the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ) which had a daily newspaper in A Voz do Povo. Under the Epitâcio Pessoa government, there was a severe crackdown with countless anarchist militants being jailed, tortured and murdered, trades unions shut down and labour newspapers pulped. In October 1920, the police dispersed a workers' parade down the Avenida Rio Branco with gunfire and, not content with that, stormed the UOCC headquarters, wounding 5 workers and rounding up a further 30.

The labour movement was reeling from the onslaught and went into a decline from 1921 on. The 'yel- low' unions expanded rapidly and came to contest hegemony in several trades with the revolutionary unions. Among anarchists, the high hopes vested in the Russian revolution were evaporating as news percolated through of the Bolsheviks' repressiveness.

On 16 March 1922, nine days ahead of the launching of the Communist Party of Brazil, the UOCC carried a document entitled 'Refuting the False Claims of the Communist Group' and declaring its repudiation of the state communists, the 'Bolshevists'. It was assuredly written by Domingos Passos. Throughout the 1920s, Civil Construction workers were the steeliest and least compromising opponents of the Bolshevist doctrine. They were the very embodiment of critical awareness and in a number of regards took their toll of the communist cadres.

In July 1922, in the wake of the failure of the revolt by the lieutenants from the Copacabana Fort, the repression slapped a ban on the UOCC paper 0 Trabalho, to which Passos was a regular contributor. A new anarchist bastion in the press was under the charge of another UOCC militant, Marques da Costa, editor of the Labour Section with the newspaper A Patria.

In 1923, with the police crackdown hot on his heels, Domingos Passos stepped down from the UOCC Executive Commission and turned his attention to propaganda and union organising, travelling twice to Paraná to assist the local organisations. Like the intellectuals José Oiticica, Carlos Dias and Fabio Luz, Passos was frequently invited to give talks at union locals. He was also actively involved with workers' festivals, acting in plays, giving poetry-readings and talks

on social themes. Such events certainly accounted for some of the few moments of pleasure that Passos enjoyed during his life as a labourer and political activist.

During the first half of 1923 he was one of the driving forces behind the relaunching of the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ), the rival FTRJorganisation having been set up under communist control. When the FORJ resurfaced on 19 August 1923, Passos was elected on to its Federal Committee. Refloated by 6 unions (civil construction, the shoemakers, the coopers, the ships' carpenters, the 'gastronomies' and the Maréchal Hermes General Trades Union) by mid-1924 the FORJ had recruited a further 5 significant trades: foundry-workers, brickworkers, ironworkers, steelworkers and stone- workers. In spite of state repression and underhanded communist tricks, revolutionary syndicalism grew in strength under the auspices of the FORJwhich was at that time working on the organisation of an inter-union conference in Rio and planning the 4th Brazilian Workers' Congress. In July 1924, all of this organisation effort was wiped out by the crackdown following a junior officers' revolt, in Sâo Paulo this time. Union locals were attacked and shut down, and hundreds of anarchists were jailed. Domingos Passos was one of the first to be arrested and after 20 days of suffering at Police Headquarters he was held in the prison ship 'Campos' in Guanabara Bay. The months that he served on board were characterised by severe privation and restrictions. With other anarchists and hundreds of 'outlaws', he was to be moved to the 'Green Hell' of Oiapoque, the 'Siberia of the Tropics,' where ill- treatment and disease claimed over a thousand lives. Passos managed to escape to Saint-Georges in French Guyana. Meanwhile, fever drove him to seek medical treatment in Cayenne where he received

a warm welcome from a Creole who helped him regain his strength. From Guyana he moved on to Belem where he remained for a time as a guest of the organised proletariat in the city.

Domingos Passos was one of those who returned to the Federal District after the state of siege enforced by the Artur Bernardes government for nearly four full years (1922-1926). On reaching Rio de Janeiro at the start of 1927, he returned to union activity, but he was dogged by the after-effects of malaria. That year he moved to SaoPaulo, where he helped reorganise the local Workers' Federation (FOSP). He took part in the 4th Rio Grande do Sul Workers' Congress held in Porto Alegre. He was to the fore in the organising of several pro-Sacco and Vanzetti meetings and rallies organised by the FO- SPand its affiliates. In August he was jailed in the feared 'Cambuci Bastille' where he spent three months, subject to all manner of ill-treatment.

According to Pedro Catallo, his cell-mate, Passos left prison with his body covered in ulcers and half- naked and was sent to the jungles of Senges in the still untamed interior of Sao Paulo state, to die. A short while later he managed to write to some comrades, asking for money, which he received through an go-between. So ended the career of a man who had been one of the most influential and respected of the anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist activists of his day. Nothing more was ever heard of him, aside from the occasional, unconfirmed rumour. Not for nothing was Domingos Passos known to his contemporaries as the 'Brazilian Bakunin.' Few were as committed as he was to his ideals and suffered so much as a result. He put his all into the fight to emancipate men and women. He spent nearly a decade in prison and in tropical jungle conditions. Passos became a great beacon for libertarian and social activists in his day and in our own!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE By Michael Kimble

By Michael Kimble

For the last few months I've been reading and analyzing the rapidly building movement since the rebellions in Ferguson and Oakland, and other places where anti-police demos have been popping off. I don't claim to have all the answers but I simply want people to accept this as a contribution to the development of anarchist strategy. I think all the old models of bring about revolution is obsolete to a large degree and that the informal organization that appears to be developing is the correct strategy, but I would point out that we need to be setting some specific goals, long-term and short-term. Our longterm goal is of course, the smashing of the state, so we can begin the struggle of building new social relationships, without a hierarchical, capitalist society.

Our long-term goals do not excuse us from doing just that now in the midst of struggle. As a matter of fact, that's exactly what we should be doing right now as the fires of collective anger burns. Altho we say we don't know what change is going to look like. Of course we don't. We're not soothsayers, but the idea is to make it look the way we desire. Nothing is guaranteed but can we afford to continue to allow others to develop the change they desire. If not, then part of our social strategy should be the projection of our vision of change we desire.

As the fires of rebellion continue, many rebels will find themselves behind the walls or on the run. Remember, revolution is outlawed, illegal. So, the care and safety of comrades who find themselves in these situations should be part of our short-term goals (finances for bail, safe-houses, etc.) along with our narrative of what's going on and how change is possible, and what that change can possibly look like.

"I believe in human beings' ability to live without control and exploitation, but we have an entire social order to destroy, and lifetimes of socialization to undo. Our ways of fighting, our ways of being together, can carry our ideal world in them, but that's about all we have right now. I've spent enough time on anarchy as a daydream, the point seems to be to create it wherever we can."

This not only meets the need and care of comrades who find themselves behind the walls but shows unity and solidarity not only to the comrades but to others who are watching how we deal with each other. Believe me, they are watching. So, we need to come up with an economic strategy to raise the cash that's needed for such a project. Concerts, nightclubs, restaurants, expropriations, etc. are some of the ideas that come to mind.

I'm lumping economic, social, and political strategy together since they will overlap. Cash is also needed for other projects like purchasing land, agriculture, events, clinics, etc. Part of this strategy should be the raising of, let's say, $1000 from each anarchist group/collective, etc. I'm sure we can get 30 anarchist groups throughout the US alone to raise $1000 a year. That's $30,000 and we can replicate this year after year. Also, many prisoners have skills/talents such as craftmaking, leathercraft, etc. that can contribute to the economic strategy.

Another aspect of our political/social strategy should be establishing projects to feed the hungry, clothing, etc. Not as solutions but as examples of mutual aid and to point out the contradictions of the state. And as one avenue of subverting the state's institutions.

Further Reading:

Anarchy Live! The Writings of Anarchist Prisoner Michael Kimble

SENZALA OR QUILOMBO By Pedro Ribeiro

Reflections on APOC and the fate of Black Anarchism

By Pedro Ribeiro

In years past, when the slavery of the children of Africa was carried out by chain and whip instead of uniforms and patrol cars, black people in Brazil had only two places where they could be - in the Senzala or the Quilombo. The Senzala was a small hut placed outside the master's house, a shack in which the slaves would stay from after sunset to before sunrise, chained to the walls and behind locked doors. The Senzala was their home; there they raised their children and grew old. In secret, they practiced their language, religion and culture away from white eyes. The window of the Senzala would always face the main quad of the plantation where a single post could be seen emerging from the earth's belly. The Pelour- inho - the mast in which rebellious slaves where tortured into submission or death, whichever came first. This was the Senzala.

But, every once in a while, a laborious and dedicated group of slaves would defect from the generosity of the slave master's whips and chains and Senzalas, and go into the jungle. They would run, day after night after day after night, into the mata, deeper into the forest; away from the treacherous Capitaes to Mato, the black or mulatos overseers responsible for capturing escaped slaves. In the jungle, they looked for hope. In the jungle, they looked for freedom. In the jungle, away from the white man, they looked for the Quilombo.

Quilombos were city-states created in the heart of the mata by escaped slaves. The most famous - the largest and the one whose name was whispered in secret in the dark by those in search of freedom - that was Palmares. Palmares had a estimated population of twenty to thirty thousand, structured in eleven different villages. In Palmares, as in other Quilombos escaped slaves held the majority. Natives and poor whites were also accepted into the Quilombo, with and shared the same rights and duties as anyone else. Decisions where made by village assemblies, in which every adult, man or woman, of every race, could (and most would) participate.

No, Palmares was no utopia. It was no communist society in which the decisions where as horizontal as possible and in which all were seen as equal. Palmares had chiefs, one for each village. The chief of the capital, Macacos, was the king of Palmares. But this is neither here nor now. The now is the quilombo as opposed to the senzala.

Palmares died in flames. It fought until the last person was dead. It had been fighting for its sovereignty and independence for over one hundred years. It gave its blood to defend what it cherished most - its freedom and its self-determination.

Whatever drove the Palmarinos to fight is what I am interested in talking about. A friend of mine said something that struck a cord in me. He said: “People are always talking about dying for this or that. You gotta die for the cause if you are militant enough, if you are really bad ass you should die for your beliefs. But nobody asks, what are you living for? Not dying, but living - what is your life for?”

The Palmarinos were living for something. They were living for their freedom and their collective autonomy. They were living for their right of self-determination, to do away with the chains that held them slaves in the past and to decide by themselves the path of their life. If they died fighting for that, they died for what they were living for. They died the death of free people.

We now call ourselves Anarchists. We say we want the end of all chains and the extermination of all oppression. Yet, in the Anarchist “movement”, black folk and other folks of color are still in

the senzala. We are still having to disguise ourselves, call whitey “Massa” and chain ourselves to the wall.

No, don't talk about racism unless is in that very abstract sense of “we-are-all-equal-let's-sing-kumbayas-and-pretend-the-color-of-our-skin-does-not-matter” racism. While there might be nobody yelling “die, nigger, die!*”, you can hear a very clear “shut the fuck up, nigger, just shut the fuck up.”

We pretend that racism is just a minor problem, something that, like the Leninist State, will wither away if we will it to. The intrinsic racist characteristics that infect Anarchism, specially North- American Anarchism, cannot be questioned without one being seen as some kind of authoritarian nationalist, or even worse, a Maoist. Red-baiting, of all things!

Like in the real senzala, our resistance to racism needs to be covert. It needs to be hidden and made like it is something else. It cannot be what it needs to be, it cannot do what needs to be done, or the senzala would break apart and the master's house would be set aflame. No. Like capoeira, our fight against white supremacy inside North American anarchism needs to disguise itself as a dance in order to become a martial art.

And you know how the rap goes: if we talk about empowerment we are power hungry. If we assert our self-determination, we are authoritarian nationalists. When we expose how white Anarchism is, elitist white Anarchists generally come with excuses like “Hey, I saw a black anarchist once!” or the classic, “well, we need to outreach to communities of color.”

Let me tell you something, the reason why the masses are not flooding to your Anarchism is exactly that one - it is your Anarchism. It is a white, petty-bourgeois Anarchism that cannot relate to the people. As a Black person, I am not interested in your Anarchism. I am not interested in individualistic, self-serving, selfish liberation for you and your white friends. What I care about is the liberation of my people. The collective liberation of the children of the African Diaspora, those that have been beaten down and treated worse than dogs all across the world.

So, no, we are not interested in your anarchism. We need to create our own. Understand this, if the whites in Palmares were allies and died with the blacks and the natives it is not because they invited the blacks and the natives into their structure, into their society and said unto them: “We are all equal.” It was because the blacks and the natives created their own structure - their own society - in which power relations were different so that whites could not longer by the sheer force of their privilege impose their view of how the society should be run. To try and integrate people of color in your society or your movement, like there would be no culture clash and no confrontation - it is naive, senseless and can lead nowhere but into deception.

In the senzala of contemporary Anarchist theory and practice, the only place for Blacks and other folks of color is the chain in the wall or the Pelourinho. To question the structure of this “movement”, why is it really composed mainly of white suburban boys, is a invitation to the Pelourinho - or to the Quilombo.

Some escaped slaves decided to create their own Quilombo in the forest of North America, and they called it A.P.O.C. - Anarchist People Of Color. APOC was a necessary step on the beginning of the self- determination of people of color inside the movement. This self-determination we seek is to analyze the problems of race inside and outside the movement in our own perspective. To create our own analysis of authority and what it means for us to be Anarchists. What does it mean for those that have always felt odd at an Anarchist event while looking around and thinking are they made the wrong turn somewhere and ended up in a white only area of segregated Mississippi.

When an anarchist tells me about how the cops are fascist pigs, I stop for a second and think. A lot of times I'll of some experience in a protest against this or that corporate meeting or something, in which the cops tear gassed the crowd and whoop some ass and I think, man, you got it easy. I remember in my neighborhood in Brazil, where if you got only an ass-whooping, you would considered yourself lucky. I remember the day they shot my uncle dead. I remember this one cop that used to follow me around and scare the life out of me because I thought he was going to cap me and there no way in hell I was approaching no authorities to complain because then I would surely wind up dead. I remember the police invading my grandma's house, guns in hand, while my cousin was still a baby and was sleeping in my aunt's bed. Even here, in my neighborhood in East Palo Alto, you can always hear the cops fussing around at night and you know they are not looking for no black-bloc kid from some protest or another. So tell me again how the cops are fascists…

The fact is, we know oppression. We live it, we experience it. In one form or another, one extreme or another. We do not conceptualize it. We do not sit down and intellectualize about pain because our people have been hunted down and shot, and burned and beaten and we lost the need to understand pain philosophically when we learned it physically.

So why are the people not filling the ranks of the Anarchist movement? What it is that prevents those people of color that have been feeling the brunt of police brutality, and have been living off the scraps of what capitalism leaves behind, why have they not joined the movement?

The answer is simple: because is not their movement. It can never be their movement while it is being created by and for white middle-class kids with a Jesus complex who think they can save the world (or the ones with Buddha complex who think they can get wet by talking about water). You cannot hustle the movement and you cannot hustle the people. Revolution is not a game in which you can pretend to listen to the voice of the people of color only when is convenient and shut them off when they start questioning your privilege.

APOC, as any revolutionary step, spurned an immediate reaction, a counter-revolutionary step. The amount of voices in the Anarchist "movement" that have been raised to criticize, put down or, in any other form, discredit APOC (most, if not all of them, white, by the way) have been, if small, consistent and bold. To incur and cite these criticisms is irrelevant to today's discussion. I am not here to defend APOC. I am here to talk about why I don't need to do it.

APOC is our Quilombo. Our keep, our fortress, where we can meet as people from oppressed background and not only share our experiences and how they are relevant to each other, but also how they are relevant in the larger scheme of things. APOC is more than a safe zone for people to feel good about not being in a room without white folk, but is a conscious project of self-determination for people of color. It is a step closer to our freedom as a people and the materialization of the idea that community comes from something in common, something we can share.

No, APOC is no utopia. It is not even close. But that is neither here nor now. We may stumble, we may fall, we may even break our heads wide open. But at least we are walking on our own two feet.

It is pointless for me to try and convince white Anarchists of the need for APOC because white anarchists have not experienced what we a people of color have experienced. It is like trying to convince my boss of the need for Socialism - a more often then not fruitless endeavor.

And while there are white Anarchists out there who remember that only the oppressed can liberate themselves and the end of white supremacy cannot be brought about by white people -

there are those that, in their arrogance and shortsightedness, will not yield and cannot tolerate the thought that maybe there is something that Anarchist people of color need to discuss that does not include white people.

And if, for a moment, I thought that APOC needed to be approved by the white anarchist scene that would be the moment in which APOC would lose its appeal to me. Because is not about being accepted, being cherished, being "on the good side" with the white Anarchists - that is the Senzala. It is about self-determination and it is about resistance. It is about creating our own culture, our own analysis and dictating our own future. APOC for me is not about seeking a way to make white people love us, or hate us.

I have to tell you a secret about APOC: it is not about white people at all. It is not, and it should not be ever. I am tired of talking about white people, thinking of white people, analyzing white people and worrying about white people. I want to know what I have in common with my Korean sister and my Guatemalan brother. I want to know about the great struggles for liberation in Uganda and how the Filipino resisted imperalism. What can we learn from each other as people of color? What does my bairro in Rio de Janeiro has in common with a Latino barrio in East Side San Jose?

This is something I wrote for my sisters and brothers at APOC. We need to understand ourselves in order to understand the world around us and be able to fightand destroy the bourgeois plague which eating away our homes, our lives and our cultures.

As a black person, my anarchism is Black Anarchism. As a member of the exploited class, my anarchism is Class-Struggle Anarchism. As a person who wishes for a better future, my anarchism is Anarchist-Communism.

Vamos a ela, porque temos muito, muito para construir.

Nao ta morto que peleia!

INTERVIEW: Afro-Colombian Anarchist David López Rodríguez By Lisa Manzanilla & Brandon King

By Lisa Manzanilla** & **Brandon King

We were in Bogota at Processes for Black Communities' (PCN) national meeting this past February. Our goal was to connect with people from different regions in Colombia, to possibly link with PCN members later on in our trip. We also were there to share and draw connections with the work that the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and Take Back the Land Movement are engaged in in New York City. We also informed folks of the current situation many New Afrikans/Black people are faced with in the United States, in relation to discrimination, criminalization, displacement, and lack of access to jobs/resources, etc. Our goal was to try to build solid bonds with people and figure out ways that we could not only learn from folks there, but also to think through ways that we could concretely support one another through engaging in active solidarity.

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David Lopez was actually our first contact from PCN. We met him in Medellin before the national meeting. There, David explained the problems Afro-Colombians were having in terms of their claims to ancestral lands, and shared information about Law 70 of 1993, which grants Black communities collective rights on ancestral land. He also gave an anarchist explanation for its

contradictory element. Even though this law has been passed, mass displacement has continued as the law is not enforced. We talked about how even though the laws aren't recognized, still having something on paper shows much further progress than Black people have made in the US in regard to "legitimate" claims to ancestral lands.

In Bogota, we wanted to follow up on the conversation, and also to document it, so that we could share his views, and the work that PCN does, with more people.

[Translated from Spanish by Brandon King, Lisa Manzanillo, and Monika Ramnath.]

David Lopez Rodriguez: I was born in Barrancabermeja in the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia 56 years ago, of Zambo (mixed indigenous and Afrikan ancestry) maternal grandparents who were farmers and fisher folk in the low water regions of the Rio Grande of the Magdalena. I am an anthropologist from the University of Antioquia in Medellin and started working on projects in the Pacific southwest in 1985. Beginning in 1990, I was working with afro-leaders on the dissemination of Transitory Article 55 (TA 55) [2] of the Colombian constitution of 1991 in the ten municipalities of the Pacific Coast in the department of Narino, and the negotiation process of Law 70 or the "law of Black communities" between them and the Colombian government.

Since July 2004, I made my official link with PCN in Colombia, who were those who I was mainly working with since 1990 and this integration was through the Colectivo Libertarios Afromagdalénicos - Afro- libertarios from Barrancabermeja. In the PCN National Assembly of 2007 in Cali, we participated with Afrolibertarios in the PCN Working Group of Magdalena Medio, which we helped to form. In mid- February of 2010, we also participated in an expanded meeting of the PCN National Coordination Team with a PCN Working Group of Valle de Aburrá (Medellin) where I live with my companion, Gladyz Amu, also a descendent of Afrolibertarios, and our three children - Julián, Juan and Rafael. I am currently part of the PCN National Coordination Team in support of the PCN Working Group of Magdalena Medio and the Valle de Aburrá. I am also working on two projects with Black communities in the port of Buenaventura on the Colombian Pacific.

On Law 70

Law 70 of 1993 was an initiative of Black organizations in the Colombian Pacific supported by Black militants of Palenque San Basilio (near Cartagena on the Caribbean coast) and of a minority of afro- activists from cities like Cali, Medellin, Bogotá, among others. In the 1991 Colombian Constituent Assembly, with the support of indigenous constituents, some of the M-19 Democratic Alliance Movement and independents won approval of TA 55, by which it recognized the Black communities of Colombia as an ethnic group and ordered that no later than in two years to enact a "law of Black communities" in Colombia that would enable the collective titling of lands of Black communities in rural areas bordering the Pacific basin according to their traditional production practices and other areas of the coun try of similar conditions. It also ordered that the law develop rules on the protection of identity and the social and economic development of Black communities across the country.

This triggered an extensive and intensive social mobilization of Black communities throughout the Colombian Pacific, primarily, and ultimately led to the enactment of the law on August 27, 1993 by the Colombian government. Simultaneously, with the enactment of the law came the privatization of COL- PUERTOS (state owned company Colombian Ports) in Buenaventura, and megaproject capitalists backed by the paramilitary-a concerted and calculated strategy of the State-began the process of harassing Black communities of the Colombian Pacific coast. In

the last 25 years, Colombia has nearly five million displaced with a high percentage being Afro-Colombians from the Colombian Pacific, the Caribbean mainland, Magdalena Medio, Urabá, Bajo Cauca, and northeast Antioquia, all areas of which have a large Afro-Colombian population. They have largely been forced to Bogotá, Capital District and major Colombian cities like Cali, Medellin, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Bucaramanga, and Pereira among others. The current situation is so grave and delicate given the extreme violation of the rights of the Black ethnic group of Colombia as evidenced by forced displacement, that the Colombia's Constitutional Court ruled the sentence T025 of 2004, which defines the "State of Unconstitutional Affairs." Given the increasingly severe evolution of this situation, in 2009 the Constitutional Court, in reviewing the failure of the sentence T 025, issued a new mandate called Auto 005 [3], setting precise responsibili ties and determining State deadlines. Two years later, the situation continues to be one of neglect on the part of the Colombian State.

On the contradictions of Law 70

Anarchism has much to offer in this part, and the Black movement has the possibility of nourishing itself from anarchism in order to understand this problematic.

Starting with the historic stance of anarchism, of no or the negation of the state, such as that proposed by the bourgeoisie and capitalism, and also finally by some sectors of the proletariat [sic]. That has been a constant element of anarchism that has a lot to do with the Black movement, the afro- descendants; because since the tribes in Africa, when the elders were forced over here to America, there already existed laws, there already existed ways of organizing long before the nation-state, and precisely as an ethnic group, as a Black people, there is a difference with the state. The state corresponds to another logic and although [the Black movement] recognizes a great power in the state and therefore the need to relate with it, to mediate with it, this can not signify that all the action of the Black movement is based around the state, it can not neglect its own internal logic which has much to do with the principle of autonomy.

Now in the specific case of your question, in this context when the state grants through its laws, from within anarchism it's possible to ask, "but what or which state is it that gives those laws?"

And there are distinct analyses. One of those, for example, is the conception of the state which is not exclusively the apparatus or the organizational structure. This is the organizational expression of the state, but the state is ultimately fed by something qualitative, which is the social relationship of capital, as those analyses suggest.

Here it is very important to differentiate this category from the element of money which within Marxist critique of political economy, which argues that capital is not strictly money. Money is a result of a social relationship that makes this possible, and we recognize the contradictions between Marxists and anarchists, but we also know that there is a culture of anarcho-communism and that there are some elements we do observe there, some similarities in the middle of the controversy and the debate that has been presented historically, and perhaps this [element] is one of the important ones.

Returning to the point, capital is not metal, it's a social relationship between one human group that exploits another. This model of social relations generates the accumulation of wealth; the accumulation of wealth is the result. So in that sense, the characterization of the state, not only as an apparatus, as a repressive apparatus, as an economic apparatus, as an educative apparatus, as an ideological apparatus, not only as that, the state is an expression of the social relationship of capital. From that analysis, from that support how will it be possible, one would ask, that the

social relationship of capital which is exploitive, alienating, homogenizing, will recognize in its laws other cultural logics, other ways, that have other sensibilities? This is a contradiction.

So it all depends on how well we understand the state to be able to weigh and calibrate its own laws, and in this sense in general anarchism contributes to this reading. In other words, we obviously need to work with the laws of the state because of the great power that it has, and the necessity to concretize things on the short term for example, but that can not lead us to interpret or understand that within [the state] there is a solution to our problems.

That [understanding] will resolve, even within Marxism it resolves, the social relations of capitalism. That is precisely what is devouring us, what is killing other cultural logics. It's like an explanation in part to, let's say, why anarchism, the contribution of anarchism that even reinforces and gives support to Marxist analysis [as an explanation to the contradictory element of Law 70].

NOTES

[2] Transitory Article that recognizes collective land rights for Black communities, plus protecting cultural identity and the promoting economic and social development.

[3] Protection of fundamental rights of people of African descent, victims of forced displacement under the unconstitutional T-025.

For more information on the chronology of Law 70 see: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/469f387bc.html.

About the interviewers

Brandon King is a community organizer and cultural worker, a member of Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Take Back the Land Movement, and a former organizer with Picture the Homeless. He is a New Afrikan anarchist who is a part of the Anarchist People of Color (APOC) network.

Lisa Manzanilla is a xicana, radical librarian, musician, and capoeirista. She is part of APOC and the Northeast Climate Confluence Network. She has volunteered with Books through Bars, NYC Radical Reference, and No More Deaths.

1996: BALLOT OR THE BULLET By Greg Jackson

The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Electoral Process in the U.S. and its relation to Black political power today

By Greg Jackson

"Most of the greatest advances in Black political activism did not occur at the ballot box, but in the streets, in the factories, and through collective group awareness and mobilization…

Yet because of the electoral focus of most of the current crop of middle class Black elites, we now tend to think of power as an electoral process.

But there is also power when oppressed people acquire a sense of cultural integrity and an appreciation of their political heritage of resistance." -Manning Marable.

Introduction: Does the power of the vote equal "hope"?

As the 1996 Presidential elections draw near, more and more candidates and their supporters will be asking for your vote.

Some of the same individuals and groups from the 1992 campaigns, in addition to many new faces, will also be asking for those of you who haven't registered to vote to do so; and for those who have registered, to now exercise your "right" to vote.

But how far does the voting process extend the personal and collective political power of the people? Does your vote really count? Is the "right to vote" really a "right"; or is it actually a "privilege" given to us by purportedly "benevolent" and "fair" political leaders?

This writing explores these questions. The purpose of this is to assist in creating a fully informed public, as well as to encourage all people to really take the time to think about what they really need and desire, and how they want to obtain these needs and wants. Written specifically for registered voters of African-American descent, it is my sincere hope that all who read this will weigh the information in this text against their own personal experiences, research, and options carefully so as to make the best decision in what they feel is right for themselves, their class, and their particular community.

"It was the new politics of ambiguity; speaking for the lower and middle classes to get their support in times of rapid growth and potential turmoil. To give people a choice between two different parties and allow them, in a period of rebellion, to choose the slightly more democratic one was an ingenious mode of control. Like so much in the American system, it was not devilishly contrived by some master plotters; it was developed naturally out of the needs of the situation. " (Zinn pg. 212)

I. The Electoral College.

There is still a popular misconception in the US that we 'the people' select the president and vice president. When we as voters cast ballots for either one, those votes are mere formalities; they really don't count for much more than the value of one's own opinion. Let me explain…

The Electoral College was created around 1789, shortly after the original 13 settler colonies won their independence from the British empire. As these colonies were becoming independent, federated states, many conflicts around the rights of states vs. the rights of the federal government were happening. One of the earliest conflicts was between those who wanted the Congress to elect the president and vice-president, and others who wanted a popular vote of citizens to decide who would hold these posts. The Electoral College was created as a compromise between both opposing groups.

An Electoral College exists in all 50 states. The number of electoral college members, called "electors", is determined by the number of office holders in the House of Representatives and the Senate from each particular state; the number of congressional and senatorial positions to be filled in a state is determined by the population size of that state. Thus, the District of Columbia (a small area that is not officially a "state") has 3 electors, while the state of California (with a large population) has 54 electors; one vote for each House and Senate member in that state. Nationwide, there are 538 electors; 270 are needed for a majority (one man-one vote) in determining the national winner of a presidential race.

The explicit reasons behind this set-up for determining the president and vice-president were many. One was because of the size of the US at the time this system was created; news traveled slowly as did information on the various candidates running for public office. The founding fathers felt that there needed to be a group of "informed persons" in each state who would explain the process itself and the differences between candidates to the voting public. This group was to

be elected by voters in each state, and trusted with the responsibility of electing a president on their behalf.

The requirements for becoming electors varied for state to state; theoretically the selection of electors was to be based on the social popularity of a particular candidate for the electoral college.

The one requirement that has most visibly stood the test of time was that nominations to the electoral college were to be based on the party loyalty of the nominee. Thus, nominees who became electors were expected to cast their vote for candidates their party (Republican or Democrat) supported.

Today, once the nominees are chosen by either the Republican or Democratic party, the public then selects the number allocated per candidate based on their party of choice in a primary or in a caucus.

When voters would go to the polls in November, their votes would serve as a "signal" to the electors; if the majority of the voting public was for a democrat, for example, the electors of that party would generally vote for that candidate, the opponent's electors would concede defeat (their votes going to the winner), and the democratic party's candidate would carry that state. The votes of the electors count as the overall vote of a particular state in the national election.

However, electors are not bound by any rules that say they have to vote for whoever the public or their party widely supports. Electors have the option of voting for a candidate they as individuals support, even if that person is not supported by a majority of the people or any particular political party.

So, if the majority of voters in a state vote for Candidate “A" and the electors of that state vote for Candidate "B", the votes of the electors (and NOT the voter) are the ones counted for that state nationally; the will of the majority (as well as the minority; you and I) of the public becomes largely irrelevant.

The electors then meet on December 14th (the actual date of "Election Day") to cast their ballots for president and vice-president.

The electoral college system helps to maintain two-party dominance (political dictatorship?) in US poll* tics. Only three times in over 200 years has this foundation been seriously challenged through "legal" means; 1801, 1825, and (partially) in 1992.

In 1992, Texas billionaire Ross Perot used his fortune to finance a presidential race that he later decided to drop out of. What made Perot's challenge "progressive" (and I use this term lightly) in the minds of some was not his positions on issues that effect us as well as the majority population, but the fact that a third-party candidate was actually "taking on the political status quo" (in purely reform ist terms).

Even if Perot had not dropped out of the race, his efforts would have proven futile. The following three scenarios help to illustrate this point.

The May 28, 1992 edition of The Washington Post provides the first two (paraphrased):

"Scenario 1: Ross Perot wins 32 electoral votes. Bill Clinton and George Bush receive 253 electoral votes a piece (remember, 270 out of 538 count as a "majority"). Perot then concedes defeat to either Clinton or Bush and one of them becomes president, but not before Perot makes some type of deal with one of the candidates.

Scenario 2: Same as before, except this time Perot makes no deals and does not admit defeat. The election of a president now goes in front of the House of Representatives and the election of

vice- president goes to the Senate. Meanwhile, electoral college votes from around the country are counted on January 6th as usual.

Each state delegation must vote as one group, since deadlocked states cannot vote. This vote occurs on January 7. If the House doesn't select a president by January 20, negotiations in the House continue. In the Senate, the same process occurs for selecting the vice-president from the top two winners nationally. If their efforts fail, the job goes to the Speaker of the House; who now must resign his post as speaker, since it's illegal for politicians to hold office in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government at the same time. If that fails, then the job is appointed to the president pro-tempore of the senate, or the leading member of the Cabinet." (Wash. Post)

Scenario 3 (mine): The electoral vote is split three ways, with no candidate having a clear majority. Of course, for those of you who did the math, you already know that this scenario is impossible within the two-party/electoral college system because 538 does not divide evenly by 3. Since the college is one person-one vote, I doubt any "partial" persons or "decimal" electors would be voting. The only way to begin to resolve this within the rules of this system would be for one of the states to elect two more electors, raising the total to 540; which does divide evenly three ways. Or, for the system to refer back to scenario #2; this I believe would be the most probable situation.

Judging by the public's current discontent with both parties, I doubt that this course of action would be met with any kind of real approval from voters (let alone from the growing number of us who already advocate revolution); except from Republicans who currently hold majorities in both the House and Senate; or the dejected masses who cynically "go through the motions" at the various polling places and then remain silent; with the exception of the alienated "lone gunman" or "mad bomber" who on occasion expresses the frustrations of the largely silent and alienated public; with the exception of the right-wingers, from mainstream conservatives to crude fascist/ Klan activists/supporters.

An act of desperation which may arouse a subdued satisfaction or at the very least a morbid curiosity in the public, but never a practical solution in and of itself.

This discontented attitude of all sectors of Amerikkkan culture is historically justified, even if much of its roots are largely unknown beyond individual disillusionment of both whites and [especially] nonwhites. Charles Beard, in his book "An

Economic Interpretation of the Constitution", sheds some light on the origins of the United States Constitution, the framers of that Constitution, and the subsequent policies of that document (such as the electoral college). In it, he expounds on the economic backgrounds and political ideas of the fifty-five men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to write the Constitution.

According to Howard Zinn, author of "A People's History of the United States", Beard "found that a majority of them were lawyers by profession, that most of them were men of wealth, in land, slaves, manufacturing, or shipping,...Thus, Beard found that most of the makers of the Constitution had some direct economic interest in establishing a strong federal government: the manufacturers needed protective tariffs; the money lenders wanted to stop the use of paper money to pay off debts; the land speculators wanted protection as they invaded Indian lands; slave owners needed federal security against slave revolts and runaways; bondholders wanted a to raise money by nationwide taxation, to pay off those bonds. Four groups, Beard noted, were not represented in the Constitutional Convention: slaves, indentured servants, women, men without property. And so the Constitution did not reflect the interests of those groups." (Zinn pg.90)

Since the 1992 presidential race, more and more voices have come out in favor of a direct vote of the people, with a "run-off election in the event of a tie or three way race. Others advocate proportional representation, a system used in countries such as England, France, and Germany, in which seats in a parliament are awarded to candidates based on the number of votes that a particular candidate and party received nationally.

One of the major weaknesses of that system, like the one here, is the influence of special interest groups, professional lobbying firms, and wealthy individuals who make campaign contributions on the behalf of large companies and multinationals to candidates; eventually subsidizing some candidates incomes throughout their entire political career.

Another "weakness" (or rather, an unmentioned character flaw) can be found in the underlying ideological foundations of the Constitution and its authors;

“In Federalist Paper #10, James Madison argued that representative government was needed to maintain peace in a society ridden by factional disputes. These disputes came from 'the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have even formed distinct interests in society'. The problem, he said, was how to control the factional struggles that came from inequalities in wealth. “ (Zinn pg.96)

At the same time, this "weakness" is a strength for some sections of the American population:

"The Constitution, then, illustrates the complexity of the American system: that it serves the interests of a wealthy elite, but also does enough for small property owners, for middle income mechanics and farmers, to build a broad base of support. The slightly prosperous people who make up this base of support are buffers against the blacks, the indians, the very poor whites. They enable the elite to keep control with a minimum of coercion, a maximum of law…all made palatable by the fanfare of patriotism and unity.” (Zinn pg.98-99)

While we're on the subject of whether or not this current set up is "dictatorial", we cannot over look the role of the major media in the framing of political debate; not only amongst the public, but even amongst the candidates themselves.

During the 1992 campaign, black candidate Dr. Lenora B. Fulani was shut out of a presidential debate on national television when she was informed that her party would have to pay $50,000 in order for her to participate. More recently, on March 3 of this year, black republican candidate Alan Keyes was not only barred from participating in a televised debate between fellow republican candidates but was subsequently escorted away from the Atlanta television station in handcuffs when he protested. The television station executives claimed that he was not invited because he hasn't won any state primary as yet. How interesting! Millionaire Steve Forbes (publisher of Forbes magazine), who is white, had yet to win anywhere either but was invited to participate in that same debate.

II. Reconstruction and the Black vote.

The Thirteenth amendment to the US Constitution, ratified on December 18, 1865, reads as follows:

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

With this amendment came the promises of Black land ownership. In 1865 Union army General William T. Shennan issued "Special Field Order No. 15" which handed over the entire southern

coastline 30 miles inland to free Blacks. An estimated forty thousand former slaves settled onto the land, only to be forced off at bayonet point by Federal troops called in by president Andrew Johnson in August of that same year. In 1870 the fifthteenth amendment to the US Constitution was ratified;

"The right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." (Grilliot pg 642)

Yet, it was only with the assistance of Federal troops that Black voting rights were enforced. Only with the "permission" of a larger, better armed and organized section of the white power structure were our newly "emancipated" ancestors allowed to partially determine their destiny within a political framework not of their own design. In 1876, northern troops were pulled out of the southern states and in 1890 a new, more discriminatory Constitution was written in Mississippi. In 1890, there were 71,000 more blacks registered to vote than whites. By 1964, black voters consisted of only 6.7 percent of the 400,000 blacks of age to vote.

Our hobbled, and largely illusionary, ability to determine our own destiny has still not been reconciled, despite the numerous Black politicians in office. Samuel F. Vette, in his work "The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America ", speaks to the issue of the crop of newly elected Black officials in the wake of the various pieces of legislation won by the 1960's civil rights movement:

"While the black appointees were highly visible, they were, for the most part, powerless. And their powerless visibility in and around the bureaucratic councils added an aura of legitimacy to illegitimate acts, providing a smokescreen for dirty dealing.

This is neither to criticize nor exonerate the appointees. The fault was not theirs. The fault was in the system…by design." (Yette pg.766)

Of course, this was a historical pattern taken right out of the Reconstruction-era south; Black politicians elected to city, county, and state government only to have their power permanently checked by the combined forces of wealthy whites, their political representatives, the federal government itself (with memories of the Haitian Revolution still fresh in the minds of many in office at the time), and collaboration in the form of violence and terror from sections of the white working class until it was effectively repealed, not to reemerge with any real potential for strength until the 1960's and only after much bloodshed, numerous executive and legislative mandates, and displays of the armed might of the federal government in the form of National Guard troops.

Today, even these modest reforms are under attack. Recent Supreme Court decisions on redistricting have eliminated formerly all Black voting districts in southern states. This situation comes about in response to a-historical and materially baseless cries of "reverse racism" or "reverse discrimination" by reactionary demagogues from all sections of the class strata within the white population; whose bellowing is then met by with the fear-based, chest-beating rhetoric of equally reactionary and objectively powerless "cultural nationalists" (Newton pg.92); whose influence is limited to equally, and justifiably, scared and uncertain people [of all classes] within the Black community itself.

The classic "reverse racism" argument is eloquently stated by conservative columnist George F. Will:

"The purpose of drawing lines to create districts in which minorities constitute a majority of the voters is to assist, virtually to the point of ensuring, the election of minorities to offices to which they presumably are entitled by virtue of their race or ethnicity. The result is "political

apartheid", to use Justice O'Connor's phrase from the 1993 ruling invalidating North Carolina's districting scheme..." (Newsweek pg. 64)

How quickly Will and even a student of the US Constitution like Justice O'Connor, forget the foundational and fundamental power dynamic of this country. Article 1, section 3 of the Constitution makes it plain:

"Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons..." (Grilliot pg630)

So when white, male, land and business owners constitute a majority in the government to the exclusion of all others it is declared a "democracy", but when Blacks and other non-whites attempt the same thing, us "[excluded] Indians [and] three fifths of all other persons" are now guilty of "political apartheid"?!

This is functionally and politically impossible!

If it were not for federal troops in the 1860's-90's and again in the 1960's enforcing the 13th and 14th amendments and later the Voting Rights Act of 1965, we would have had absolutely no voice in mainstream politics whatsoever.

Yet, this can hardly be considered true Black and/or non-white political power. After federal troop withdraw in 1890, the state of Mississippi went back to its old repressive ways and added laws to the state Constitution which stripped black politicians and voters of what little power they had been granted by the 'Emancipation Proclamation' (instead of what they had won for themselves). As the US Supreme Court has demonstrated in recent years; "what the white power structure granteth, the white power structure can (and has) taketh away!" Our power is restricted to being allowed to complain and demonstrate (and even those actions have some hidden, heavy consequences), but still we are not allowed to act forcefully and decisively in our own behalf. That would be considered treason, sedition, or criminal activity; and would make us (and has made some of us) subject to harassment, imprisonment, or death (usually a combination of all).

**** **III. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 to the Present.**

"The act of registering to vote does several things. It marks the beginning of political modernization by broadening the base of participation... But obviously this is not enough. Once the black man has knocked back centuries of fear, once he is willing to resist, he then must decide how to best use that vote... He must move independently." (Carmichael pg.104- 5)

The signing into law of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by then president Lyndon Baines Johnson marked a turning point in the struggle for social equality in public spaces and employment. Yet, the use of federal election observers was not enough to insure that no violence towards Black voters or organizers occurred. Southern polling places that weren't under the observation of federal election officials continued to lock-out Black voters through written and oral tests, "good moral character" qualifications, and the usual physical intimidation and violence.

Despite all of that, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has allowed more Black politicians to hold public office. In 1970, fewer than 1,500 held office nationwide; by 1990, that number increased to over 7,300. But has this phenomenon allowed for the wide diffusion of political power to the Black masses? Recent events, with few exceptions, have said "no".

In 1991, the US Supreme Court heard a case in which two Alabama counties had stripped two duly elected Black county commissioners of their power. Justice Anthony Kennedy, in the majority opinion of the court, wrote:

“The Voting Rights Act is not an all-purpose anti-discrimination statute" (Newsweek, pg.28)

Speaking for the dissenters, John Stevens argued that the court had set legal precedent by ruling the Voting Rights Act applicable when white majorities had conspired to disenfrancise blacks. This should come as no surprise:

"...we need to remember that the Supreme Court is not always the special champion of black Americans. Indeed, if history is any guide, the Court is as likely to choke off an American Reconstruction as to precipitate one. In the 1870s and 1880s the Court gutted the First Reconstruction by invalidating or misconstruing a series of critical Congressional protections of black political and economic rights."

(The Nation pg. 698)

The larger number of minority politicians in office and candidates running for office has not slowed, nor stopped, the political onslaught of reactionary "angry white males" and their representatives (Republican and democrat). In fact, the appearance of 'dark faces in high places' has angered the most backward sections of the white population, mobilizing them as foot soldiers for wealthy and middle class right-wing elements in the public and private sector. The pointed condemnations of new legislative policies and the individual Republicans who authored them at the state or federal level, made by Black officials has done nothing to stop the attacks on people of color and small sections of the poor white population by corporations or the various branches of government. Black public officials have also taken heat from their own people; from being seen as "do-nothing careerists, opportunists, and uncle toms to actually justifying that perception by turning a blind eye to the needs of the very communities that got them elected and their underemployed or impoverished majorities.

Some, like former Philadelphia mayor Wilson Goode, went so far as to physically attack their own Black constituants as he did on May 13, 1985 when he allowed a fire to burn out of control while police and firefighters looked on after Philadelphia police dropped plastic explosives (obtained from the FBI) from a helicopter on to the home of the MOVE organization, killing 11 (five of them children) and leaving hundreds homeless.

More recently, many Black politicos even turned against each other. Protests against the federal Crime Bill made by members of the Congressional Black Caucus fell on deaf ears as the bill was passed with overwhelming bi-partisan (Republican and Democrat) support. Joining in the chorus of "get tough on crime" and "lock 'em up and throwaway the key" were mayors of major metropolitan areas, including many Blacks; which helped to not only silence their fellow Black office holders, but also helped to give a thinly veiled justification to white racist arguments that "racial equality" had been achieved and that vote outcomes (whether in the polling places or in the chambers of state or federal government) and has nothing to do with race-consciousness or racism.

In addition, "grassroots" initiatives, ranging from the denial of gays and lesbians to equal protection under current civil rights laws, to mandatory minimums for drug offenses, to increased police powers in search and seizure raids were pushed through without so much as a wimper or an organized counter-campaign from Black or other non-white politicians.

Then again, their fearfulness has a name and a face. In addition to fighting the ideological wars with other office holders, the Black political elites -like the rest of us- had to face the organized might of Conservative "intellectuals" and other “rights for [privileged] whites" types, along with their Republican (read: fascist) representatives in government (local, state & federal),and sup-

porters within the business world and all classes of white society. Some of their work includes Washington State's "Three Strikes...You're Out!" and "California's Proposition 187".

It makes sense that these so called "grassroots initiative drives" (media terminology) would in fact serve as "fronts" for various corporate interests, special interest /lobbying groups", right-wing "think tanks", etc; the average successful initiative campaign in the state of Washington costs $250,000.00.

In the past five years, 12 initiatives have made it to the ballot in that state; 11 got there because their sponsors had paid signature gatherers. In order for an initiative to make it to the ballot, it must have 180,000 "valid" signatures. Once an initiative is voted in, it becomes law; which can only be taken away by the state legislature or the courts. As you can see, there are no real guarantees that we can exercise our human right to self-determination within apolitical structure in which we have to "pay to play", in addition to waging the usual protracted battle(s) just to maintain those few meager concessions that our people shed blood for and lost their lives for back in the 1960's.

Because we are at the mercy of the US Supreme Court, and the court is currently trying erode what few concessions we have won (with assistance from the Republicans, democrats, and other supporters of the Amerikkkan state; white or Black) what real guarantee(s) do we have to insure that we are not completely stripped of all political power? Or are we in such a state already?

IV. Conclusion.

The choice facing Blacks and other non-whites of all classes today comes down to this: Do we continue to attempt to work within a system that only presents us with marginal benefits in return for its own self-perpetuation and benefit (and as a result, our continued oppression) or do we make a collective attempt at overthrowing this system and replacing it with one that places greater emphasis on the needs and desires of our people and makes an equal distribution of wealth and political power its number one priority for all people?

Clearly, the largest proportion of people on the bottom of the economic and social ladder in the United States today are Blacks and other people of color. Scientists are also estimating that by the year 2000, one out of three persons in the US will be a person of color or of mixed racial background.

Thus, the choice facing whites is to adapt themselves to, and make meaningful contributions to, the mass uprising and revolution of non-white workers and poor people or to join the various forces of reaction from right of center politicians to far right militias/nazis/Klan extremists. The social and political polarization of Americans has made the politics of liberalism and all variants largely irrelevant, except in academic circles and in the minds of the wishful or ignorant.

We can expect these divisions to widen as wages continue to lag behind the increasing cost of living, as jobs are shipped overseas by profiteering corporations, as already impoverished areas continue on their downward slide, as middle-class black politicians continue to be rendered functionally powerless (in addition to being alienated from the community at large), and attitudes on both sides of the racial divide fixate on race alone (egged on by white racists in white communities and "pork-chop nationalists" within communities of color [Newton pg.92]) in place of a coherent analysis of the class issues related to American history, economics, and social policy; and their cumulative relation to skin color and political power.

From this comprehensive analysis, grounded in the realities of the daily lives of the most directly affected persons, must emerge a practical, liberating program for political empowerment and community-wide transformation of social relations amongst working-class Blacks in Amerikkka. History has shown that it is our people who constantly provide that elusive "leadership by example" for other communities; the 1960's would have never happened without it.

If a successful revolution can occur in the Black community in Amerikkka, it can happen anywhere in Amerikkka. And it is up to each and every one of us to assure that it happens. We owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to workers and peasants across the globe, to make the Black revolution a reality.

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THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE BLACK ANARCHIST POSITION By Hannibal Balagoon Shakur

By Hannibal Balagoon Shakur

Black brothers, Black sisters, i want you to know that i love you and i hope that somewhere in your hearts you have love for me. My name is As- sata Shakur (slave name joanne chesimard), and i am a revolutionary. A Black revolutionary. By that i mean that i have declared war on all forces that have raped our women, castrated our men, and kept our babies empty-bellied. I have declared war on the rich who prosper on our poverty, the politicians who lie to us with smiling faces, and all the mindless, heart-less robots that protect them and their property.

-Assata Shakur

I was born into the flames of slave insurrection. My first recorded ancestor was a runaway slave named Felix. In between him and me have been several butchered half lives. My grandfather, the oldest ancestor I've had the pleasure and privilege to interact with, was, as a young man, captured and tortured with "electro-shock therapy'' for months on end as a consequence of his very material defiance and resistance to this "constitutional violence" that Wilderson describes in "the vengeance of vertigo". As a result he was introduced to this "performative contingent violence'' forever carving into our family tree the scars of his/our subjugation. In the same way that many families pass down the stories of how grandparents met and the idiosyncrasies of ancestors long past, I was passed a narrative, a framework for my own identity, of pure unflinching antagonism. I can only imagine this is part and parcel of the reason Michigan pigs pumped 40 bullets into my cousin's chest a few months ago or why my other cousin is serving a life sentence. It's difficult to make distinctions between Oakland and Monroe, between prison and plantation when past and present meet in these spaces and moments. What joins us, stronger than our own blood even, are the subjective and objective vertigos.

A lot happened in 1986, some fascist doctor plucked me from my mother and introduced me to violence at the same time my lungs introduced me to air. He told my mother he wanted to break my collarbone to get me out because I was too big and healthy. Assata Shakur was settling into her new home, in exile, Cuba. Mutulu Shakur had been captured and charged with helping her escape from a maximum security men's prison. A month and a half before I was born Winnie Mandela gave a historical speech endorsing the political nature and necessity of mass guerilla resistance to the apartheid state in South Africa. "We will dismantle the apartheid state even if we only have rocks and boxes of matches". A month after I was born, the apartheid state declared a state of emergency. In 1985, cocaine-related hospital emergencies in the US rose by 12 percent, from 23,500 to 26,300. In 1986 that figure then increased 210 percent, from 26,300 to 55,200, as the crack solution to the "panther problem" unfolded in communities that were the direct site of insurrection, like Watts and Oakland specifically, and all black neighborhoods in general. Sadly, my namesake, Kuwasi Balagoon died in December of 86 in a torture camp. His cause of death: the state... biological warfare. In Richmond, CA unguarded trains full of US military firearms and explosives were routinely left in the back of the North side neighborhood. I dodged my first bullet likely from one of those guns in 89 when I was

three but that would not be the last. That was constitutional violence. When the state decides they want to assassinate or grand jury summon me for what comes next that will be contingent violence.

-Hannibal Balagoon Shakur

If we are to survive this wave of repression, if Anarchy is to become a vehicle of the people, we must direct our energy to the new infrastructure. Programs that meet essential needs of the people must meet them with the explanation of why they are necessary. Programs that perpetually treat the symptoms of capitalism without feeding the mental struggle of the people must be replaced by comrades who pull no punches. We must show our friends and our neighbors that nothing can do more for them than they can do for themselves through Anarchism. We must show that "non-profits", and NGO's whose politics consist of liberal obscurities and multicultural tokenism, will not put more food on their table, put more homeless families in clean homes, will not put more police terrorists to an end than Anarchism.

It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano- Mexicano people endorse nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination or agree with anarchism as being the only road to self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses. It is not only racism but compliance with the enemy to stand outside of the social arena and permit America to continue to practice genocide against the third world captive colonies because although they resist, they don't agree with us. If we truly know that Anarchy is the best way of life for all people, we must promote it, defend it and know that the people who are as smart as we are will accept it. To expect people-to accept this, while they are being wiped out as a nation without allies ready to put out on the line what they already have on the line is crazy. -Kuwasi Balagoon

It's a shame that now the false media image of the white Anarchists is going unchecked. It's a shame that white "radicals" can think of only themselves when they say the word Anarchist. New Afrikans are not free. Our majorities lie within the pelican bay plantations and secret torture camps that exist throughout America. Yesterday we were slaves and today we are slaves. In the same vein that slave owners outlawed and prevented slaves of the past from written communication, slaves today find their correspondences disrupted and destroyed. As New Afrikans our political formations are completely repressed. What is popular among New Afrikan Anarchists will never find the same platform or footing as what is popular among negro capitalists and negro reformists. What we have to say, the voices that spring forth from the underworld of the plantation, will not find the same attention among white radicals as nihilist voices will. We will not find the same attention among the broader movement to end capitalism. We are written out of existence by negro nationalists who speak for "the black community" and white radicals who speak of themselves as "the Anarchists". This dichotomy has done nothing to increase support from either side. White Anarchists want to speak for all poor people and negro nationalists want to speak for all black people. Neither formation wants to hear what we have to say. Comrades have been dealing with these contradictions for some time. Sometimes I fear those of us with our ears to the plantation are too few and far between to influence the broader, "free", population. This is in fact the impetus for this communiqué. You say working class and think of what you perceive to be the bottom, people working all day at minimum wage to feed and house their families. This is working class but this is not the bottom.

"Elsewhere I have argued that the Black is a sentient being though not a Human being. The Black's and the Human's disparate relationship to violence is at the heart of this failure of in-

corporation and analogy. The Human suffers contingent violence, violence that kicks in when s/he resists (or is perceived to resist) the disciplinary discourse of capital and/or Oedipus. But Black peoples' subsumption by violence is a paradigmatic necessity, not just a performative contingency. To be constituted by and disciplined by violence, to be gripped simultaneously by subjective and objective vertigo, is indicative of a political ontology which is radically different from the political ontology of a sentient being who is constituted by discourse and disciplined by violence when s/he breaks with the ruling discursive codes. When we begin to assess revolutionary armed struggle in this comparative context, we find that Human revolutionaries (workers, women, gays and lesbians, post-colonial subjects) suffer subjective vertigo when they meet the state's disciplinary violence with the revolutionary violence of the subaltern; but they are spared objective vertigo. This is because the most disorienting aspects of their lives are induced by the struggles that arise from intra-Human conflicts over competing conceptual frameworks and disputed cognitive maps, such as the American Indian Movement's demand for the return of Turtle Island vs. the U.S.'s desire to maintain territorial integrity, or the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación NacionaTs (FALN) demand for Puerto Rican independence vs. the U.S.'s desire to maintain Puerto Rico as a territory. But for the Black, as for the slave, there are no cognitive maps, no conceptual frameworks of suffering and dispossession which are analogic with the myriad maps and frameworks which explain the dispossession of Human subalterns." -Frank B wilderson III

We must put into context comrades who have already lost their children to the plantation state's foster care system. These comrades, who are subject to sensory deprivation, beatings and electrocution torture, work for a measly few cents an hour. Not because they want to but because they will be further isolated and punished if they do not comply with the production demands of the plantation.

These comrades, many of whom have taken up arms against the banks and the slave catchers, are largely invisible to us simply because we don't see them at any events and we don't drink with them after the demo and they don't come to dance parties. What's more is we have allowed, through sheer neglect, the prison to become a factory that produces sociopaths who snitch on our comrades to get freedom and then come and wreak havoc on our communities. We have allowed that by our inaction. We have allowed rape to become just another gadget on the pig's utility belt. The brothers know this intimately. Every time we see a pig we see ourselves being raped. Current plantation trends are going largely unnoticed.

"Prison has always been the final gate in the repressive apparatus of a state. It serves the purpose of social and political control, although it manifests itself differently in different nation-states and in different political periods. Nevertheless, the prisoner is, with few exceptions, always a scapegoat and considered a deviant. Prison is not only a class weapon; it is also an instrument to control "alien" populations. In the United States, these "alien" populations are formerly colonized peoples - former slaves, Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders - and they have all too often been considered the internal enemy. They are the people most needing control and are therefore the majority of those locked down in U.S. prisons. The United States is the world's primary example of a country that deals with its social, economic, and cultural problems by incarceration. But this is its history. Prisons are the logical outcome of the country's foundation on the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, and the "manifest destiny" of imperial settlerism - from sea to shining sea." -Marilyn Buck

Do we still have the will of John brown? Or that of Nat Turner and Harriet Tubman? Are we still committed to abolishing prisons? Where are our ties with slaves? Not individual ties but

collective ties. Fundamental ties. So long as the prison exists it's inhabitants will inevitably find themselves in a struggle to destroy it. That struggle must not be isolated from that of the outside. It must not be isolated from populist efforts. Critical infrastructure must be organized to expedite the flow of information through the walls. Collectives must be on standby to strike with direct action in retaliation for acts of repression against prisoners. Prisoners must provide networks of protection and support for anti-state guerillas that are captured. All comrades must orient themselves to the eventuality of their capture. It must be clearly understood that the struggle in no way ends when you "get caught". It only intensifies. In the same way comrades oriented themselves to the infrastructural needs of the camp when we took Oscar Grant plaza, things like food security and medical needs, we must orient ourselves to the material needs of the broader community and prisoners as integral members of that community. A genuine effort to keep prisoners, individually and the prison population in general, up to date on all current events is required here. I've heard comrades speaking of the "patriarchal nature" of prisoner formations, how these things preclude radical engagement of anarchism. This, coupled with the fact that there's no anarchist "set" at any level comparable to "nationalist sets" within the prison system, has led me in search of a clearer analysis, or at least one that fits my intended narrative that of the seldom heard often felt incomprehensible black anarchist. Anarchism like anything else finds a radical new meaning when it meets blackness. While anarchists have an endless list of critiques directed at the culture that permeates prisons, little is articulated in the way of actually changing these cultures, as if these were inherent character traits impervious to stimulation and engagement. There exists a fear even, of prisoners, of the calcifying nature of their abject conditions.

"Well, we're all familiar with the function of the prison as an institution serving the needs of the totalitarian state. We've got to destroy that function; the function has to be no longer viable, in the end.

It's one of the strongest institutions supporting the totalitarian state. We have to destroy its effectiveness, and that's what the prison movement is all about. What I'm saying is that they put us in these concentration camps here the same as they put people in tiger cages or "strategic hamlets" in Vietnam. The idea is to isolate, eliminate, and liquidate the dynamic sections of the overall movement, the protagonists of the movement. What we've got to do is prove this won't work. We've got to organize our resistance once we're inside, give them no peace, turn the prison into just another front of the struggle, and tear it down from the inside. Understand? A good deal of this has to do with our ability to communicate to the people on the street. The nature of the function of the prison within the police state has to be continuously explained, elucidated to the people on the street because we can't fight alone in here. Oh Yeah, we can fight, but if we're isolated, if the state is successful in accomplishing that, the results are usually not constructive in terms of proving our point. We fight and we die, but that's not the point, although it may be admirable from some sort of purely moral point of view. The point is, however, in the face of what we confront, to fight and win. That's the real objective: not just to make statements, no matter how noble, but to destroy the system that oppresses us.

By any means available to us. And to do this, we must be connected, in contact and communication with those in the struggle on the outside. We must be mutually supporting because we're all in this together. It's one struggle at base."-George Jackson

If we really mean class war, we need all the warrior elements of our class to be actively engaged.

With the new developments of the Pelican Bay Short Corridor Collective, we are witnessing a moment that possesses great potential for the unification of our struggles. When people are

subjugated and oppressed at the level we see today, psychologically and materially, we must orient ourselves to the undoing of that hegemonic hold. We must orient ourselves not to weeding out people but to weeding out of people injustice and oppression. We are, myself my close comrades and hopefully you too, endeavoring here to transform the criminal consciousness into a revolutionary consciousness and there already exists a principle basis established by comrades like George Jackson and Kuwasi Balagoon.

Now is the time for us to aggressively push forward and show the world we aren't afraid to fight the fascist, to show them we are prepared to make the same sacrifices that they already have.

It's gonna be kill me if you can not kill me if you please‼‼

To My People by: Assata Shakur
http://www.assatashakur.org/mvpeople.htm
The Vengeance of Vertigo by: Frank B. Wilderson III
http://www.vorku.ca/intent/issue5/articles/frankbwildersoniii.php
Anarchy cant Fight Alone by: Kuwasi Balagoon
http://www.kersplebedeb.com/mvstuff/profiles/anarchv.html
The U.S. Prison State by: Marilyn Buck
http://monthlvreview.org/2004/02/01/the-u-s-prison-state
Remembering the Real Dragon: an interview with George Jackson
http://www.historyisaweapon.conn/defcon1/iacksoninterview.htnnl

10 years of Vermelho e Negro and the Recapture of our Revolutionary Libertarian and Anti-Colonial Political Line

In 2010, I had the opportunity to study and work alongside Afro-Brazilians at a semi- autonomous community organization. At one of the organizing events, I was introduced to people organizing</ strong>

Reaja ou Sera Mortx (React or Be Dead), also known as the March against Genocide of Black People.

The material conditions of Black people in Brazil, the country with the second highest amount of peo- pie from the African Diaspora, are astounding. Police brutality, lack of access to education, healthcare and poverty are the factors that have driven Black people to mobilize against the police state. The March against Genocide of Black People, commenced in 2005, has been a movement meant to confront these lived realities in Brazil.

After being introduced to members in the group, through short conversations I learned that the movement included Black anarchists, Black Marxists, Pan Africanists- mainly Brazilians that embraced a Black radical political tradition. In the United States, I had seldom come across Black people that engaged with traditional anti-authoritarian, anti-nationalist politics and cultural politics. Although, as Steve Biko stated "culture is a weapon of struggle". The early 20th century Pan-African radical cultural politics in the United States has become co-opted into reformative and degenerative Black Nationalist politic.

Nevertheless, as we struggle to create a Black radical tradition we should fight against libertarian es- sentialist identity politics. This sentiment does not detract from the Black experience being an anomaly in left politics in the United States. The historical legacy of state violence geared

toward Black radical thought disassociates us from the notion that anti-black violence is just a class antagonism.

The lived violence the black body experiences permeates all systems so deep it cannot just be a resurgence of the First International's "Negro Question" today. I hope sharing this piece will continue the dialogue that can sustain a global black liberation.

-Diana E.

Estrategia Libertaria

February 2016, Bahia Brazil

In 2005, we began the mission of constructing an anarchist organization in Bahia. We started as a work space -- a small study group in Feira de Santa, where militants involved in the student movement, the Black movement, community organizing and counterculture gathered. We took part in the national construction of the FAO (Forum do Anaquismo Organizado) and gave ourselves the name of our group, "Vermelho E Negro" (Red and Black). Red and Black makes reference to the traditional colors of anarchism and Exu, the Black rebellion against slavery, the rage and anti-colonial uprising.

Within the foundation of the study group, the organizational leap to an organized anarchist group was in 2006, as with the start of the construction of networks in other cities for the formalization of a state organization, until we lost consistency and decided to stop the activities of the Red and Black in 2011. Our activists were involved with militant struggles for the youth and working class students, women workers, those on the outskirts of town, for LGBT rights and against homophobia, for public transportation, for the right to the city, workplace organizing, struggles for Black people and against racism, in rural and urban occupations, popular education, struggles for indigenous people and dozens of solidarity activities and mutual aid. A quote from Bakunin in one of the documents from Red and Black really encapsulate the first phase of our organization, the Russian Anarchist in our first references, from "Tactics and discipline of the revolutionary party", said that " we have for better or worse built a small party: small, in the number of men who joined it with full knowledge of what we stand for; immense, if we take into account those who instinctively relate to us, if we take into account the popular masses, whose needs and aspirations we reflect more truly than does any other group."

The experience of Red and Black has also had a fundamental importance in breaking the Eurocentric block of Brazilian anarchism, a pioneering role in the country to merge libertarian ideology with anti -colonial thought, recognizing our ancestral values and affirming the role of black people in the process of revolutionary social transformation, re-vindicating anarchism as an ensemble of forged methods in the struggle for liberation of the people and dreams of emancipation.

In these 10 years since the founding, and with only a period without functioning in our organic instinct, we resumed our political line as the core founder of the Red and Black, we reaffirmed our strategy and we continue improving our methods. We do not recognize the necessity of anarchist organization with a public face like before. We see the need to promote a libertarian and anti-colonial current; in which we propose to call "quilombismo", as synonymous to the militant anarchism that we defend, a revolutionary and libertarian concept that breaks statist

[1] Black Panther Party tradition in the US

logic and the pacifism of "quilombismo reformism" and the white and Eurocentric hegemony within anarchism the same time; and it fuses elements of Pan -Africanism and of "Panterismo"[1]

We continue our task, to bring down our capitalist civilization, to defeat white supremacy, the state and capital, constructing the struggles of our people on the way to liberation.

Reflections on Ferguson

by Lou D

We arrived in St Louis early on the morning of Saturday October 11th, the day of the Community March and Rally. We parked near a market, and emerged not twenty minutes later to find the car sporting a ten dollar ticket for parking without paying the meter. No signs anywhere indicated that parking was metered on weekends; where we come from in Buffalo NY, they are not. We spoke to the meter person, asking how we would possibly have known that parking was not free on weekends. She walked away without speaking.

After this inauspicious beginning, we couldn't help but notice that most of the businesses were closed, the streets were deserted. Navigating the city was very difficult for vehicles, apparently deliberately so, with streets blocked by temporary barriers in odd places. (We later saw a sign explaining these streets were closed for the football game - on the following day.) After parking - and paying - we headed to the march location, where easily a few hundred were already gathered. We stationed ourselves in sight of a giant Hands Up Mike Brown puppet, and watched as the area filled.

The march began in short order, and it became clear that we were among thousands, multiple marching bands, exuberant youth, babies being pushed in strollers, signs declaring solidarity from Vermont, Chicago, HBCUs, Communists, Socialists, Jobs With Justice, too many organizations to count. This march was somewhat staged a la the Peoples Climate march in NYC for out of town allies, the familiar "marshals" in neon yellow vests handing out schedules and enforcing that sidewalks stay clear. Despite the regimentation, the atmosphere was one of joyful defiance. The chants, call and response, drumming, singing were tremendous, I found myself dancing, shouting. I realized then the sobering truth that in repressive atmospheres of cities like St Louis and Ferguson, youth of color dancing, laughing, simply moving freely and expressively in their own streets, is in and of itself a radical act of liberation.

The march ended at a park with a multicolored fountain, a lovely irony given that our brothers and sisters in Detroit are having that basic necessity of life cut off for a few hundred dollars past due, while the biggest corporations rack up tens of thousands of water bill debt and suffer no repercussions. We had a chance to see the beauty of the city, its multiple sculptures, sparkling buildings and water effects, even a xylophone embedded in the concrete for play, an extravagant display of attractions - while unemployment among people of color, especially youth, remains at shocking levels.

We spoke to local protestors and learned that mainstream media coverage notwithstanding, the people of Ferguson have demonstrated nonstop since Michael Brown's murder. So, we opted out of the scheduled events and decided to see Ferguson for ourselves. Again, the plethora of roadblocks made this simple exit a challenge but we finally found ourselves on Florissant Avenue, driving past empty businesses, interspersed with fast food, car repair, convenience stores, churches and gas stations. The streets are clean and the former beauty of this town is evident everywhere. We saw small paper signs on a former Kentucky Fried Chicken announcing "Ferguson

Response". Strains of Christian music could be heard, so we turned into the empty parking lot to see. We found a single white tent sheltering a handful of white fundamentalists singing and swaying. We continued on our way.

Directly across from the Ferguson Police Station, we met 72 year old Walter Rice, a Vietnam veteran and resident for more than forty years. Mr. Rice has stationed himself here for days, with a lawn chair and poster, quietly protesting. From him, we learned about history of this city, first next to and now engulfing most of the first incorporated black city in Missouri, Kinloch. Free blacks had lived here for generations after settling during the great American westward expansion. He recounted how the indigenous peoples were removed to Oklahoma to make way for the influx of settlers, and the history of schools, First Baptist churches, generations of successful people of color, families of blacks mixed with natives and whites through marriage, pride and loss and triumph.

What he did not speak of was that the gradual impoverishment of the black city of Kinloch led to portions of it being purchased by the growing cities of Ferguson and St Louis, the history of white rage manifested in pass laws, fights for free blacks and indigenous people to remain free, fights for schools for "colored children", lynchings, riots, Plessy versus Ferguson.

He talked about conversations with the Mayor after the brutal murder of Michael Brown, watching the increased militarization and aggressiveness of Ferguson and St Louis police. He told us about literally placing his body between tanks and young protestors of color, speaking to the police as a veteran, asking how they could respond to legitimate protest with such brutality. He wept constantly as he spoke, not aloud but with quiet tears that rolled down his brown cheeks. I cried too, hearing how he just could not display the ubiquitous "I Love Ferguson" lawn sign, saying that he loved what Ferguson was, not what it had become.

We hugged, and took pictures, and agreed that there is a time to grieve and a time to fight back, that we were there because he himself was our uncle, our father, grandfather, the people of Ferguson are our family and Michael Brown is our beloved brother and son. That was when we received word that the commemoration at Michael Brown's memorial would begin in a few hours. We decided again to forgo the scheduled events and headed directly to Canfield.

Among the many lessons I will be taking from Ferguson, the fierce protective reverence for the memorial itself has to be noted. Down the middle of the street is a row of candles, mementos and offeren- das ordered carefully by size and kind: stuffed animals, jewelry, cards, letters, placards, posters. I added a locket and ribbon, a gift from my deceased fiance, a fellow sojourner added a rock Lake Erie that has been her personal talisman. We were humbled to offer these tokens in an effort to show our love and respect for Michael, his family, his friends and his community. They have offered themselves up, day after day for over 70 long days and nights, by the hundreds, to police violence and national scrutiny, to demand that racist police killings stop here and now.

In that somber but defiant spirit, we had the honor of taking part in the nightly march from Canfield to the Ferguson police station. Hundreds marched, and hundreds more rode behind, honking and chanting. Neighbors en route came out on their lawns to dance, clap and chant… The procession took nearly thirty minutes.

We arrived in front of the Ferguson Police Station to find four hundred plus people chanting, "We're young, we're strong, we're marching all night long!" And "Hands up, don't shoot", listening to exhortations from community leaders. We were asked to sit in the street and rose to a moment of silence. The chanting went on for nearly two hours. At one point the crowd split like an amoeba, one mass grouped around a speaker the size of a small refrigerator that pumped out

hip hop, dancing, chanting, jumping, fists pumping. The larger mass was directly confronting row upon row of police officers in full riot gear (complete with a tank), shouting that they were not there to protect and serve, not a part of this community and the way to show where their hearts lie would be to quit the racist police force altogether. The officers stood unmoving - maybe comforted by the fact that as we rallied, scores of other officers were quietly blocking off Ferguson's streets, forming the cage of blue that would later force the break-away marchers into stopping at the QuikStop, where a peaceful sit-in would result in 19 arrests.

Our departure Sunday morning was delayed by the news that two of my comrades had been arrested during that sit-in. Fueled by twitter, the peoples' news, we learned about a night of kettling, pepper spray, batons, abuse, confrontation and resistance. We found out the state of the arrested, hit up twitter to get supporters calling the police station demanding answers, and headed back into Saint Louis. An advocate from MORE was busy posting bond for those who did not have funds, and we donated to their fund. We made contact with college administrators who had had students of theirs arrested, and supporters from as far away as Springfield Massachusetts working on the release of their comrades. After exchanging contact information, we reluctantly hit the highway. Too slowly for all of us waiting, over the course of the day, in groups of four, the protestors were finally released. (You can imagine the shouts inside the little car late that night, when I learned via twitter that my comrades were released and on their way home safely!)

Words cannot express how proud I am to have stood shoulder to shoulder with black and brown people that know firsthand the brutality of the racist policing system. They know that the cameras won't roll forever, and that in the dark of night they will be a community among too many facing violence that will never make the headline news - and have chosen to face the beast head on. Yes, there were a handful of protest vampires in the streets as well, with a ridiculously transparent political agenda.

The protestors in Ferguson clearly know that as well, and have not hesitated to demand respect for their fight for justice for a slain brother, son, friend. They are adamant and active in making sure that their movement will not be co-opted by anyone, whether a self-proclaimed radical fringe or an opportunistic self-serving professional politician. The patronizing, paternalistic and ultimately racist pronouncements of concern about "outside agitators" reveals more about the speakers than the fighters themselves.

I also believe there is a growing realization among white Americans that a peace which entails that a segment of the population meekly submit to harassment, stigmatization, criminalization, brutalization and slaughter is no longer acceptable. White comrades and supporters are accepting the challenge to fight racism, taking to the streets of their hometowns, declaring that "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil.. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act." I hope with all that is in me that this number grows, and that white allies do not succumb to the pressures of privilege, and quit when the going gets tough, which it must.

Most importantly, the protests in Ferguson show it is literally true that the power of the people doesn't stop! False leaders, career mongering politicians, pundits and panderers of all stripes have come, postured and gone during these 70 plus days of protests. The people of Ferguson and freedom fighters all across the country and the globe have drawn a line in the sand and said NOT ONE MORE, not without a fight. And we are still soldiering on. This moment feels decisive because it is decisive - masses of people whose strongest qualification is determination have proudly chosen to dedicate themselves with whole hearts to the fight against racism. One of my favorite chants starts with "they think it's a game, they think it's a joke". A heads up to

the powers-that-be and those out there profiting off of the status quo - it's not. More and more black and brown people, in numbers growing daily, are dead serious that until there is justice there will be no peace.

Lou D is a member of the Black Rose Anarchist Federation from Buffalo, NY working to free BPP/POW Jalil Muntaqim

ROSA NEGRA FEDERACIÓN ANARQUISTA

BLACK ROSE ANARCHIST FEDERATION

MISSION STATEMENT By Black Rose

We are an organization of revolutionaries who share common visions of a new world - a world where people collectively control their own workplaces, communities and land and where all basic needs are met. A world where power and participation flow from the bottom upwards and society is organized for peoples' aspirations, passions, and needs rather than profit, racial prejudice, patriarchy, or imperialism; and where we live sustainably with the planet.

We believe that this vision can only be brought about through the revolutionary power of the working class organized in the workplaces, community, schools, and streets to overthrow the state and capitalism and build a new world from the bottom up.

As those actively seeking to construct this vision we are inspired by the traditions of anarchist-communism, anarcho-syndicalism, especifismo, platformism, feminism, queer liberation, black liberation, abolitionism, anti-racism and their history of global struggle for liberation. We believe in the need for a political home from which to organize ourselves and put forward our vision. We believe in the need to create spaces for the development of new revolutionaries that allow the grouping together of similarly minded militants.

We see the need to build a specifically anarchist organization united around a common set of ideas, strategy, and practice. We believe that political organization should speak to the needs of our time, and act as a catalyst in struggles to expand their revolutionary potential. Political organization should be a vehicle to build, contribute to, and learn from social struggles.

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Black Rose Anarchist Federation
Black Anarchism: A Reader
February 29, 2016

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